

RED ACTION

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Wilf the Beast, C18 enforcer confronts World In Action camera crew.

In a disquieting development, leading anti-fascist magazine Searchlight, who, for a number of years have been campaigning for C18 to be proscribed as a terrorist organisation, now claim that it was in fact set up by MI5. What is particularly startling is that up until March this year Searchlight have been actively lobbying on behalf of MI5 to be given the task of dealing with Combat 18. They argued that Special Branch were not up to the job, and that a 'national response' was needed. MI5, it was argued, could be used to form that 'national force'. But, according to the April edition of the magazine, a 'master-servant relationship' exists between MI5 and Special Branch, with the latter under instruction not to interfere with C18. Furthermore, in addition to lobbying for MI5, Searchlight also have over the last two years been the source of numerous articles in the press, as well as three major TV documentaries designed to bring the existence of C18 to the attention of the public. Many militants in the anti-fascist movement regard the value of these exposes with scepticism, especially as the information on which they were based was kept a closely-guarded secret from them and hoarded, until revealed by one section of the media or another as an 'exclusive'. Not much satisfaction there if your skull has been fractured in the meantime. Not only that, the ballyhoo associated with the revelations was sometimes felt to be more reminiscent of an advertising campaign rather than a devastating denunciation. Especially since it was well known that C18 had good strategic reasons to celebrate their resultant celebrity. Given Searchlight's pivotal role in regard to intelligence data, the importance to the entire anti-fascist movement of the questions arising from the Searchlight disclosure does not need underlining. If Searchlight was unaware of the master/servant relationship existing between MI5 and SB then their reputation as legitimate experts on the far-right is in tatters. It means that for three years they were duped. Alternatively, if as they have hinted, they suspected it was a honey-trap all along then they were attempting to dupe everyone else. Either they were promoting MI5 in complete ignorance of the C18 connection, or they were promoting C18 in blissful ignorance of its MI5 origins. While these and a number of alternative scenarios are possible, the real explanation behind this menage a trois is probably even more self-servingly cynical.

To no-one's great surprise, World in Action followed up the Lansdowne Road fiasco with yet another 'expose' of C18. Since the World in Action premier in April '93, one and a half hours of prime time TV has been devoted to exposing C18, with Channel Four's 'Despatches', transmitted in October 94 squeezed in between the WIA offerings. The latest 'promo', in March this year, followed exactly the same format as the other two. Wild, largely unsubstantiated claims, atmospheric music, sobbing, unsympathetic victims, doorstep confrontations with snarling villains and, dominating the latest effort, a fake 'cock-erney' voiceover from an a-c-t-o-r, sounding like a flower-seller from 'Brief Encounter' crossed with the Harry Enfield character, Chulmley-Warner.

Like the criticisms made of many TV sitcoms, this was 'hard-hitting' documentary from the middle-classes to be consumed by the middle-classes. Where the former are designed to promote a feeling of security and smug well-being by presenting society as homogeneous (ie middle-class), the documentary approach is to trigger a feeling of disquiet, revulsion and disgust within the same strata. But, of course, British society is not homogeneous, it is in fact, like much of the rest of Europe, increasingly polarised, in particular with regard to the twin issues of race and immigration.

So to present C18 as the common enemy, an agency of retribution and vengeance against the multi-cultural society, and to portray the activities of the far-right generally as a criminal conspiracy by racists against decent

society is to ignore the political reality that society is itself racist. That millions do not share middle-class values, or that working-class racists might empathise with the villains rather than the victims, is regarded with indifference or dismissed as inconceivable. Black propaganda that can be exploited by its target is of dubious value, and nine times out of ten, counter-productive. A recent BNP



publication exults: "I don't think that ...the Anti-Nazi League realise the large number of gangs, soccer crews, and just basic lads who like a good scrap, and who have been impressed by the image of the 'nazis' that has been portrayed by the whingeing left in the media. It has been a constant source of amazement to see the number of heavies approaching known nationalists and offering respect and assistance". The appearance of the ANL on Right to Reply following the Dispatches broadcast was in belated recognition of the damage caused to its credibility by allowing *Despatches* to depict them as a bunch of defenceless wimps. While accurate enough, this did little to boost the already jittery morale of its own membership.

As was the case in the previous efforts, the portrait of C18 was familiar, malevolent, omnipotent and larger than life, the authorities were bumbling and inept. Anti-fascism feeble and impotent. All the fascists were working-class with alleged criminal connections, while the opposition are hand-wringing liberal types. In the latest

documentary, one of the many victims acknowledges that even thinking about her encounter with C18 induces 'fear'.

Typically, World in Action's closing shots were of a C18 activist, 'Wilf the Beast', confronting a camera crew. He tries to grab the camera, there is a scuffle, immediately he launches another attack. Suddenly one of the camera crew screeches a warning: "George, watch out! The man's got a screwdriver!" Cue music, credits roll. The impression being conveyed is that things are out of control. The message? Something must be done. The question is 'what'?

C18 present themselves in their own propaganda as a serious outfit 'who ain't having it': seriously political and seriously insane. 'Let them hate so long as they fear' etc. The media follows suit. Why? Only Searchlight can answer these questions.

The media coverage following the vandalism within Lansdowne Road was an unexpected propaganda

windfall for C18. Initially it was put down to 'mindless violence', then, on the strength of a couple of leaflets, the NF were mentioned. By Friday the BNP had been brought into the frame, and, incidentally, denied any involvement, but it probably wasn't until the week-end that C18 were given full national and international credit. It is now an established fact. C18 were responsible for the 'riot' in Dublin, and the responsibility for that lies entirely with Searchlight.

There are two principle reasons for this. One, Searchlight's raison d'etre is to collect data and information on the activities of the far-right. This information is then analysed and published in a monthly magazine. Searchlight also provides valuable information to the broad anti-fascist movement on a non-sectarian basis; from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs. Or so they would have you believe. In return for this generosity of spirit, in return

Continued Over

Method in Our Madness

On 28th April, the BNP organised a mass canvassing / leafletting session on the Coxmore Estate in Kirkby, Ashfield. The Midlands region of AFA organised around 80 people on the day, with the intention of stopping this event. Due to the efforts of AFA, the fascists have been unable to organise with any success in the East Midlands for some time now, and they see Kirkby as a last stand. On the day, BNP scouts were located on the High Street, and they obligingly led AFA to the main body of leafletters. However, AFAs way was blocked by a sizeable body of police,

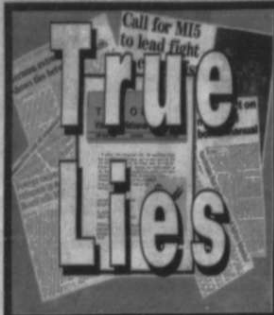
including dog handlers and horses. The police demanded that AFA turn back; AFA refused and were subsequently baton-charged, leaving one member hospitalised with his leg broken in five places and with serious dog-bites. The police continued to get between AFA and the BNP, but the fascists insisted in running off, in full view of the local residents, who were no doubt suitably impressed by this show of strength. Under heavy police guard, the AFA



contingent were escorted to the edge of the estate. When they attempted to make their way back to the High Street, their way was, once again, blocked by the police who, once again, baton charged, causing several injuries.

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INSIDE: Saoirse Launch



for this free-flow of information from Searchlight there is a free flow of information from activists up and down the country to Searchlight. But of course, all information is not published and all information is definitely not free. As an item in Hill Street News points out: "Searchlight staff, as professionals, expect to get paid for their work". For as well as being an information bureau for the anti-fascist movement, Searchlight is more than happy to provide a similar service for the media. For a price. And as far as the media is concerned, information is only really valuable if it is exclusive. So anything of interest to anti-fascism is also likely to appeal to the media. And, increasingly, as far as Searchlight are concerned, he who pays the piper calls the tune, so the media comes first, second and third. Even old news can be valuable as long as it is exclusive, or packaged as a theme. So while Searchlight often provide the media with specific information on request, as part of a purely commercial transaction, as a supplement to their income, they also feed the media the occasional 'theme' story: fascists 'n' football, fascists 'n' guns, fascists 'n' drugs, fascists 'n' loyalists, etc. While this collaboration

would also have its financial element, it would not, of course, be any old story, but one which fits in with Searchlight's political agenda. Searchlight's political agenda, commercial interests apart, is the second and primary reason that C18 were exposed.

In co-operation with the News of the World, Searchlight were involved with exposing C18 on three successive Sundays; ten days before, three days before and the Sunday after Lansdowne Road. Lead stories, mostly, followed up by double-page spreads. In radio and television interviews during this time Searchlight also claimed that the C18 publication 'Putsch' had predicted the riot. However when the Sunday Telegraph challenged Searchlight editor Gerry Gable to identify from the extensive photographic and film evidence of England supporters in Dublin, a single individual who he believed was in or associated with C18, he was unable to do so. Undoubtedly there were fascists actively involved in the violence in Dublin; AFA has already identified a substantial number, particularly from the Midlands. But that in itself is of no real significance, because for years now, the supporters that follow England, often from the more obscure clubs, have distinguished themselves by their vocal support for the various causes the far-right champion. So if there was violence in Dublin, where's the surprise? Of the 4,000 strong crowd, probably eight out of ten of them would be up for it. 'No Surrender to the IRA' is, after all, their anthem.

Excepting that no evidence has been presented to suggest that C18 operatives were even there, what is the motive for insisting that organisation was exclusively responsible? The reason is simple. Searchlight has

established a very lucrative franchise in relation to C18. The April edition of Searchlight boasts that following events in Dublin; "Searchlight was deluged by over 200 media requests for help and information." This is perfectly understandable; after all, Searchlight 'discovered' them. To anti-fascist militants on the ground they were and still are the same motley bunch, operating under a new nom de guerre. No more, no less. (Indeed, in an interview in a French underground magazine, 'Terror Elite', spokesman Charlie Sargent acknowledges that it was because of the activities of Red Action and AFA that they were forced to form their own organisation and hit back).

White Wolves

'No more, no less' doesn't, of course, interest the media - the 'glamour' of para-military violence does. That is why Gerry Gable is playing Max Clifford to Charlie Sargent's Antonia De Sancha. Though they may on the surface be bitter enemies, the de facto relationship remains, for the moment, more like agent and client. Searchlight have established exclusive rights to the C18 story, and so naturally are interested in promoting the notoriety of their protege. C18 concur. They have no electoral ambitions, and they eschew electoral politics. Consequently, if they offer no conventional political threat, it is vital they carry a physical threat. Nor, as might be imagined, are they interested in notoriety for its own sake, as the blustering propaganda in their own publications might suggest. In a much more sober document, notoriety is not seen as a means in itself, but a means to an end, a vital part of an over-all strategy. A strategy, purely and simply, for race war.

The strategy of 'leaderless resistance', is outlined in a sixteen page A4 document, entitled "The White Wolves" which first appeared in the beginning of '94. Though the "White Wolves" is depicted within the document as an embryonic organisation within its own right, it is now generally accepted (including Searchlight Jan 95) that this is merely a C18 flag of convenience. The strategy, as outlined, is indistinguishable from C18's modus operandi, and, more importantly, not at all implausible. Indeed, the fatal stabbing of Richard Everett, a white sixteen year-old, in an area of Camden with a history of racial skirmishing, with which a number of Asian kids have been charged is precisely the kind of development that C18 has in mind. Condensed, it reads:

"All of today's patriotic groups are happily acting as the Establishment's safety valve...young whites willing to make massive sacrifices to defend their race and territory...neutralised and sucked into menial unproductive activities [elections]...it is important these groups [BNP, etc] exist, if only to act as a source of recruits for the physical struggle we must wage to take our country back...To blunt an immigrant family isn't going to be half as scared of dozens of nationalist leaflets coming through his door as one nationalist petrol bomb coming through his window...our main line of attack must be the immigrants themselves...if this is done regularly and effectively and brutally the aliens will respond by attacking whites at random...it is true that racial attacks are taking place even now, but they fail to spark immigrants into serious reaction because they recognise that such attacks are the work of isolated individuals. A phone call to the press...claiming responsibility for a knife or petrol attack 15 minutes earlier [by C18]...is bound to create more fear and hatred than just another racial attack. The greater the shock, the greater the chance for a tit-for-tat war...we do not believe that we alone can win the race war, but we can start it!"

The document envisages C18 operating on two levels. One, on a conventional level, where they recruit, tried and trusted elements of like mind who have been heavily involved over a number of years. So publicity is not needed to recruit. The only people they



One of C18's stated aims is that members strive for "the optimum physical condition." (above) C18's 'Guv'nor', looking like a gerbil in a designer shirt. Time to get on your treadmill, Charlie?

might want to attract directly they already know. The second level is to encourage the setting up of autonomous cells to take part in systematic provocations against the black and immigrant communities. The provocations are designed to create the justification for black retaliation, followed by a 'whitelash'.

The ominous potential of such a strategy is heightened by the regular denunciations by groups like the ANL of any attempts at retaliatory targeting of fascist activists, even when the ANL themselves are the victims. In similar situations, petitions are not likely to satisfy Asian youth. 'Retaliations' will still occur, but in the absence of collaboration with more experienced anti-fascists or accurate intelligence, they will and can only be arbitrary and indiscriminate, which, as we have seen is the envisaged response. The document continues. "There is no need for a command structure of any sort within [C18]...We're not trying to take on the British Army." Though cells would be along conventional 'terrorist' lines, with intelligence officers etc, "sophisticated weaponry is not needed to start the ball rolling. The fight must start now with simple weapons which anyone can find or use...as previously stated the bulk of our activity must be copy-able, so if you're only prepared to throw a brick through a window - do it. Claim [C18] responsibility, then do it again."

Black Propaganda

So, unlike conventional organisations, propaganda is not concentrated at what is deemed its own constituency, which in C18's case is the white working-class. Publicity is, of course, required for the strategy to be effective but C18 feel that the very fact of their existence is best advertised amongst those who could never join - the black and immigrant community.

C18 acknowledge that while any immigrant community would be terrified by a petrol bomb through the window, the ability of any act of violence to panic or stampede a community is reduced if the attacks are perceived as random and unconnected, if the attackers are anonymous, or equally, if the victims are ignorant of the motive and reputation of the organisation responsible. To put it another way: if you don't already know what C18 means, C18 means nothing. How much more potent the C18 imagery now, especially after the Lansdowne Road publicity coup, can only be imagined. The C18 strategy demands that all publicity is bad publicity; "Let them hate so long as they fear", etc.

Searchlight knows the possible consequences of promoting them as 'supernazis' better than anyone, so what's the game? From the outset, purely in the interests of self-promotion, the Searchlight modus operandi is to try to command a monopoly of intelligence on the far-right.

Parallel organisations are, to say the least, frowned upon. Individuals or organisations deemed to be rivals ruthlessly denounced.

On Sunday March 5 The Observer carried a story on C18. The apparent failure of the journalists to acknowledge Searchlight's pre-eminence in the field resulted in them being described as: 'inept jerks, whose contribution made proper journalists and experts on the far-right fall about with laughter.' It went on: 'The most farcical element' of the Observer affair was

that another Observer journalist had already covered the same story 'exactly a year before'. Investigation reveals that the article in question is based on an entirely different document. Similarly, failing to pass on information promptly is regarded as totally amateur, with-holding some snippet little short of treason. January 15 1994, a joint operation initiated by AFA and involving, for the first and only time, the ANL and YRE resulted in what Searchlight reluctantly admitted was "a major defeat for the nazis of Combat 18 and Blood and Honour." This didn't prevent Searchlight denouncing AFA's "sectarian obstinacy", which, according to them, "meant that the anti-fascist demonstration missed the news deadline for the listings magazine Time Out, which probably reduced the turnout to oppose the nazis by 500 people". Total bollocks, of course (if any middle-class listings magazine could mobilise 500 anti-fascist militants with the ability to disrupt a 1000 strong Blood and Honour initiative within a day of it hitting the streets, then there would be no reason for any organisation, let alone AFA, to exist). The real reason for the foot-stamping was entirely predictable: "AFA failed to inform Searchlight..." - first. So, not only could Searchlight not claim part of the credit, they couldn't even find out what went on. The covering report contained 13 factual errors.

Searchlight has to be first. Competition rather than co-operation is the name of their game. The objective is firstly, to appear infallible, and consequently, indispensable. Once they have the whip hand, many groups have found themselves in a love/hate, cat/mouse relationship, not unlike the bond between junkie and pusher. Occasionally, they may even flaunt their pre-dominance in the intelligence domain. Reporting on the visit of an American racist attorney to Manchester, the March edition of Searchlight crowed: "The local radio and press corps helped Searchlight keep tabs on the visitors and the people they met. But an anti-fascist group [AFA] that now has its national office in the city appeared oblivious to the presence of one of the world's foremost racial warriors". And Searchlight certainly weren't going to tell them; nothing personal, mind, just business.

For the Searchlight operation to work, the absence of serious rivals is absolutely vital. One, it allows them to corner the intelligence market, and, two, no-one is in a position of authority to invalidate their projections. This puts them in pole position; allowing them advantage of an overview, on which to set their own agenda, but also, by a rigidly regulated dispensation of information (both true and false), attempt to control the agendas of other organisations as well. And everything, literally everything, the operational effectiveness of the broad anti-fascist movement, and even the personal safety of individual anti-fascist activists, is subordinate to the Searchlight agenda. For instance, the Anti-Nazi League, who are now the public face of Searchlight's agenda, useful for presenting data to the Home Secretary, etc, might have believed that this arrangement was reciprocal. Not a bit of it. Instead, rank and file members have been dismayed to discover (a), that their names and addresses, in substantial quantities, are cropping up in a variety of fascist publications, and (b), that

Bourgeois Incredulity



As the evening wore on, the TV channels sought to explain the context of and background to the mayhem. 'Marketplace' (RTE 1) went peculiarly sociological for a finance programme, with Miriam O'Callaghan interviewing Rogan Taylor of Liverpool University and Gerry Gable of Searchlight magazine about Combat 18, the *Einsatzgruppe* of the National Front. "You really mean to say this was about politics?" said Miriam with bourgeois incredulity.

Well, yes, they assured her, it was about politics of a sort. The neo-Nazis support the North's loyalists and they had come to Dublin "to try to wreck the peace process." Nobody mentioned Red Action, the far-left's answer to Combat 18. Red Action supports the IRA and has clashed with the National Front in a number of British cities in the last few years. The North has an exhilarating "sectarian chic" for British morons seeking to justify their violence.

Irish Times, February 18, 1995

It seems that your average member of the British National Party (BNP) unwinds after a hard week trying to build an electoral base in the East End of London by giving Nazi salutes, destroying sections of football stadiums, injuring dozens of people (including children, for God's sake). It should be stressed that there were no more than 40 or 50 fascists among the crowd of over 4,000 English supporters, around 1%. The vast majority of England fans see those involved in the violence as 'animals'. Those arrested at Lansdowne, however, do not fit the stereotype of a fascist (thick, unemployed working-class yobbo). The trouble-makers seem to have been very well-heeled indeed.

Joe O'Connor was in the departure lounge at London airport the day before the game. In the Sunday Tribune he wrote that while some of the rowdies wore jeans, T-shirts and Docs, many had well-cut fashionable suits and mobile phones.

Socialist Worker, March 1995

In the aftermath of the football violence in Dublin, there were wild accusations that most of these young men belonged to fascist organisations. I simply don't believe this. What no-one wants to admit is that these represent your normal working man.

Some anti-fascist groups have resorted to 'direct action' to combat the neo-Nazi threat at football grounds. The Trotskyist Red Action and Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) combine the distribution of leaflets to fans outside stadiums with attacks on what they call the 'racists'.

Danny is the AFAs 'general' who runs gangs taking on 'the Fash'. His face is scarred from a decade of clashes. "If you don't attack them they are free to organise politically. If you attack them they can't do that."

Why is it that these anti-fascist organisations are predominantly White and male? Their desire to meet violence with violence on behalf of oppressed Black people is only an excuse for White men to have a good ruck. This type of rivalry has become a kind of war game where racism is the red rag for men to test their masculinity.

Tony Sewell, The Voice, 28/2/95

Searchlight's gratitude didn't extend to informing them. What's a little firebombing here and there, if the Searchlight agenda and the case for the proscription of C18 is enhanced, seems to be the attitude.

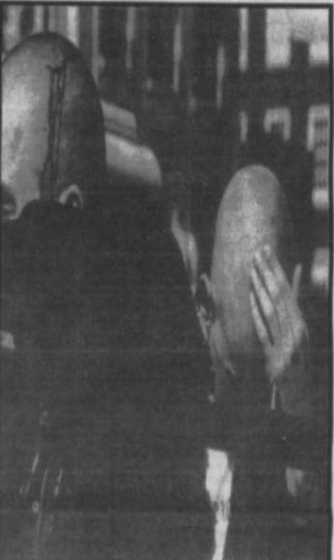
Even in 1989, with Blood and Honour planning a major gig in London, featuring seven bands, and, with AFA searching frantically for the venue, Searchlight, who as a direct result of AFA's field work were informed that it was in Camden, simply sat on the information. It leaked out, anyway, and Blood and Honour got well spanked. Searchlight awarded the credit for the victory to some "brave students" and promptly pocketed the B&H down-payment which the venue had donated to the anti-fascist movement in gratitude and solidarity.

M15 Crusade

In broad terms, Searchlight has always wanted the state to take the principle role in the fight against racism and fascism. To sell the idea, there must first of all exist a substantial threat. That established, much of its propaganda is spent directing and exhorting the police to do - more. Shortly after Beacock's BNP election success in the Isle Of Dogs in May 93, Gable in a statement carried in the Evening Standard, was partisan and unequivocal: "Local police complain that the Special Branch are just not doing their job properly. They would be better protected if M15 took over." Gable's irritation with the Met's Special Branch in particular, "stemmed from its refusal to work with other organisations that had put together a large amount of intelligence on C18." (Searchlight, April 93) From then on, Searchlight were no longer campaigning for the state generally to do something, now its campaigning weight was publicly and brazenly behind a specific agency within the security services - M15. From Searchlight's point of view, even though they had run a similar campaign against the BNP, the public persona of C18 was ready made for such a project; the ideal hook on which to hang the pro-M15 crusade. This is primarily because the Searchlight analysis of C18 as 'terrorists out of control' is not challenged, least of all by C18 themselves, who revel in the infamy. For instance, unlike the BNP, who denied any involvement in the Lansdowne Road 'riot', Charlie Sargent, in an interview with the Sunday Express, was only too happy to back up the Searchlight 'expose', and went even further - insisting he was there! And in the same interview, commenting on a possible prosecution following the seizure of Blood and Honour material from his home, he remarked: "If I get sent down it will be a massive shot in the arm for us." Given that green light, the Searchlight editorial of March '95 went completely OTT. After a ritual dig at Special Branch 'complacency', the editorial lost all objectivity: "All the fears Searchlight and others have expressed to the authorities over the past three years about Combat 18's potential for violence and mayhem were realised when Combat 18 nazis orchestrated the riot at the England v Ireland football match in Dublin on 15 February" it raved. "Combat 18 not only advocates serious violence but has the arms with which to carry it out...if law and order are to prevail, the police and prosecuting author-

ities must recognise that Combat 18 is an organised criminal gang and it needs a co-ordinated national response to halt it." Not, you notice, a co-ordinated anti-fascist response nationally, but a co-ordinated state response. Britain does not have a national police force; the call for a co-ordinated response is simply a rather coy code for M15 to take over. And all for an organisation that Searchlight themselves acknowledge has less than 100 members. Understatement has never been a Searchlight characteristic. Neither has consistency.

While the March editorial cast C18 as a threat to the national interest, within a month Searchlight states that they may instead have been formed by the state in a 'justifiable' effort to protect the national interest. "When Combat 18 was formed some of its key players had known links to the intelligence services...the reasons for M15 wanting to establish...a 'honeytrap' on the far-right are understandable and possibly justifiable at the time C18 was created." The rationale advanced by Searchlight on M15's behalf is that: "loyalist para-militaries had started to cooperate with fascists in Britain. Clearly M15 needed to know the extent of such joint operations. So Combat 18 came into existence." More bullshit. The master/servant relationship between the



Hyde Park, May 27, 1989, a fore-runner to the Battle of Waterloo. Searchlight gave the credit for wrecking 'The Main Event' to "brave students". (above, a couple of AFA victims ruefully checking their bones)

security services and the loyalist paramilitaries is widely acknowledged and has existed for over a quarter of a century. The UVF/UFF are already largely state controlled. If M15 set up C18, it wasn't to discover information on organisations already in their pocket.

When researchers from World in Action approached AFA to appear in the programme that went out on March 27, our representatives agreed, with one proviso - that if the intention was to treat C18 as a virus rather than a symptom of a wider problem, then AFA must be able to bring in a little perspective, by explaining that militant anti-fascists were at least working on an antidote. And that while C18's ambition was to unite all the football firms behind a nationalist theme, then the appropriate counter-measure was to deal with the problem at source, by organising physical and political opposition within those clubs where the fascists are visibly active (as was done in the seventies at Tottenham etc), and in addition, where the fascists have no influence, to encourage these fans to identify openly with an anti-fascist stance. Work along these lines is well under way, particularly at Glasgow Celtic, and also at Man United. Everton is another club where there has been a degree of co-operation (joint benefits etc). This strategy might not "offer much hope of peace on the terraces" (as a recent item on the Nine O'Clock News remarked), but it has proved devastatingly effective in a variety of other arenas up to now. World in Action never got back to us. Instead, it produced a chicken-shit rehash of the Searchlight theme of April 93, ie: 'C18's campaign of terror and the inability of the anti-fascist movement to curb it.' While C18 want to stampede a section of the population in one direction, Searchlight were intent on stampeding them in another.

Britain is a right-wing country moving steadily right-wards. C18 and the BNP etc are a reflection and expectant beneficiaries of society's decomposition. For Searchlight and previously progressive elements in the media to publicly champion a right-wing organisation of far more sinister hue and ambition, M15, as the antithesis of C18, not only misrepresents the problem, but to attempt to do so in the name of

anti-fascism is, ironically, only further proof of this rightward drift.

But wait! That was in March. In April Searchlight tell us that, "it is in the interests of democracy that those dealing with political extremism are seen to be accountable. It is also clear that democracy can be endangered if faceless, unanswerable bodies such as M15 are allowed to run such operations." In addition, we are informed that far from being incompetent, the Special Branch, "must have been under pressure not to investigate C18." "Now," apparently, "for the first time since the Second World War in Britain, anti-fascists may find allies in the police in the war against nazis terrorism." Nazi terrorism? Surely they mean state terrorism? Even for a group with an entirely deserved reputation for political 'bed-hopping', Searchlight appear increasingly promiscuous, lacking any apparent fidelity.

Unlike March, when law 'n' order was in peril, the message now is that everybody can rest easy in their beds. Everybody, that is, except for militant anti-fascists. Nobody needs reminding that whenever the state is invoked to move against the right the ground is also prepared for it to move against its opponents at the other end of the political spectrum. In its April editorial it "welcomes the announcement of a new specialist police squad to look into the activities of groups such as C18". Groups such as ...?

Skulduggery

Assisted by Searchlight, The News of the World ran stories on C18 on three successive Sundays throughout February, starting on the 5th and ending on the 19th. To no-one's great surprise, the following week the paper followed up its C18 scoop with yet another expose, which began: "Manchester United supporters are being recruited by extreme left-wing terror groups to wage war against neo-nazis on England's football grounds. Sinister organisations Red Action - backed by the Provisional IRA - and Anti-Fascist Action are using a new United fanzine to launch their sickening appeal...etc." Up until the M15 - Searchlight - C18 bombshell it is safe to assume that Red Action and AFA were likely to be the subject of similar, if less politically rewarding, initiative.

What will happen now, with Searchlight unexpectedly jumping ship, is anyone's guess. What is undeniable is that at least until March of this year Searchlight have been busy manipulating the scenery to convey the impression that C18 and M15 were natural adversaries; and that if M15 were the recognised skulduggery champions, then C18 were at least worthy challengers. All parties to the 'axis' had, as we have seen, much to gain from this charade. M15 need the work; C18 were grateful for the publicity; for Searchlight, in addition to increased revenue as a result of an enhanced status with the media, there was also the prospect of a 'special relationship with the new masters - M15. A vicious and unprepossessing circle

Genuine anti-fascism has been the only loser. But if lessons have been learned, it will, in the long run, have done the militants a massive favour. For the real battle has not yet begun. The far-right is obviously awaiting the prospect of a Labour victory with some relish. This, they believe, will automatically cast them, with all other options discredited or exhausted, as the real 'party of opposition'. In the light of this challenge, and in order for militant anti-fascism to survive, quality intelligence is vital. Up to now many people up and down the country fed this intelligence to Searchlight, in the belief that they were best placed to exploit it, on behalf of, and in line with the general aims of the overall movement. Their trust was misplaced. Meanwhile, the militant cutting edge was being increasingly blunted by a pro-active police force (particularly in London), and systematically starved of intelligence. From now on, if individuals have information that they believe may be of value to genuine anti-fascists, then our advice is simple - give it directly to AFA. If you still believe that the ANL have something to offer, that is your prerogative. Their number is in the book. For Searchlight, on the other hand, there can be no way back. One way or another, their number is surely up.

AFA 0161 232 0813

Little-Englander

The position adopted by the anti-fascist magazine, Searchlight, in relation to the war in Ireland has for some considerable time been of concern to Red Action. Whilst Searchlight has provided evidence of collaboration between fascists and their counterparts among Ulster's hard-line loyalists, their attitude to Republicanism appears to have been to throw enough shit in the hope that some of it will eventually stick. There have been a continuous stream of allegations, stretching back over years that insinuate that the Irish Republican Movement are in league with various European and North American fascists. At no time have Searchlight provided a single shred of evidence to support their contentions. Their suggestions that Harold Covington is an IRA supporter and that his Klansman friend, Sean Maguire, is a Provo because he wears a Sinn Fein baseball cap are, to say the least, pathetic. Incidentally, I think that you'll find that the SF on Maguire's cap refers to the San Francisco 49ers rather than Sinn Fein. Still, if the cap fits...

The experience of anti-fascists in Britain would suggest that rather than being sympathetic to fascists, supporters of Sinn Fein and the IRA in Britain have been to the fore of the anti-fascist struggle. However, in perverse attempts at balance, Searchlight have continued to peddle fabrications and half-truths about republicans.

Searchlight's main contention seems to be that all nationalism (with one notable exception) leads to fascism. Therefore, all nationalists are fascists and all those nationalists who deny fascist links are either guilty by association or liars! The leading advocate of this line among Searchlight's team is Ray Hill, a former fascist himself, who, despite the continual references to fascists who support Sinn Fein in his column, appears to have shown absolutely no support for Irish nationalism during his own period of fascist activity in South Africa and Britain. Hill has gone to quite enormous lengths at times to tar Irish Republicans with the fascist brush, denying the anti-fascist history of Irish Republicanism and singling out both Glasgow AFA and Red Action for completely mindless



"Here'll be a drink in it for you, Charlie." Ray Hill and Sargent, two Little-Englanders in Diksmuide.

attacks. In the case of the AFA branch, Hill accused its Republican members of beating up those within its ranks who refused to support the IRA!

In October 1993 issue of Searchlight, Hill replies to the criticism of him in RA's letters page with: "...the fact that we have shared platforms with both Republicans and Orange Lodge members in Scotland does not mean that we are prepared to sit back and watch children butchered and civilians murdered in their own homes by either side." I'm sure that the British security services share your sentiments, Mr Hill. Such statements also beg the question as to what Hill and Searchlight are inferring by not being "...prepared to sit back..."? Have they extended their remit to include all those that they deem to be acting against the wishes of Searchlight? The dropping of the addresses of AFA branches considered by them to be too close to Red Action from their back page may indicate that the shift started some time ago. Hill may no longer be a fascist but it's a sure thing that he still carries the small-minded Little-Englander mentality of his old associates. At past rallies in Scotland he has even had the arrogance to suggest that Labour's devolutionist plans, let alone the SNP's call for independence, was a step towards fascism!

A clue to the real reason behind Searchlight's attitude, however, is revealed earlier in the same piece when Hill states, "Searchlight has been in the forefront of exposing far-right Loyalist connections from the very first issues of the magazine, long before I came on the scene, and has not wavered from this despite the death threats from supporters of the Ulster Volunteer Force and Ulster Freedom Fighters."

Is Hill actually saying that Searchlight have had the frighteners put on them by the Loyalists? If so, it would certainly explain why they should go to such lengths to associate Irish Republicanism with fascism in order to 'even the score'.

The assertions about Bobby Sands Rallies at Diksmuide are a complete fantasy. There are certainly Flemish fascists who harbour sympathy for Irish nationalism. Indeed, at last year's event in Diksmuide, British nazis fought with Belgians after hearing them singing 'Molly Malone' (not exactly a homage to the IRA - 'Alive, Alive Oh!') and the fact that it was an Irish song was enough for C18 to kick it off. The fight ended up with the two sons of a Belgian fascist MP being hospitalised. But even if there were pro-IRA rallies at Diksmuide (and there are definitely not, according to the Ireland Committee in Flanders) what does it matter as long as the IRA and Sinn Fein refuse to have anything to do with them and continue to denounce fascism and racism?

We would also challenge Searchlight to provide the evidence of the "...fascist connections since the seventies..." of German nazis with Republicans. It will come as a great surprise to many German anti-fascists who cooperate with Searchlight to hear such allegations as, in our own experience, it is the anti-fascists rather than the fascists in Germany who tend to be pro-IRA. But then again, when have Searchlight ever been prepared to let the facts stand in the way of a good argument?

Internal Affairs

The failure in Britain to pay attention to the arrival of bomb manuals on computer discs, the lists of people and organisational targets on computer bulletin boards and the open declaration of war on the front cover of Combat 18's publication, The Order, is the reason for Searchlight's call for the investigation of nazi terror groups either to be put into the hands of a special police unit attached to the Police National Intelligence Bureau, or to be turned over to M15 and M16.

Searchlight Editorial, January 1994.

To those even more cynical than me and the Searchlight team, I pose the question: is Combat 18 being allowed to exist to service some mad scheme by irresponsible officers in our security services? Sit in a cool dark room for ten minutes and think about it. Ray Hill, Searchlight, September 1994.

The reasons for M15 wanting to establish another "honeytrap" on the far-right are understandable, and possibly justifiable at the time that C18 was created. But the question is, if you set up such an organisation, how much leeway do you give it to establish its credibility. Searchlight Editorial, April 1995

It is in the interests of democracy that those dealing with political extremism are seen to be accountable. It is also clear that democracy can be endangered if faceless, unanswerable bodies such as M15 are allowed to run such operations. Searchlight, April 1995.

No Peace Without Release

The Saoirse (Freedom)

Campaign in England and Wales to release Irish Political Prisoners was launched in the House of Commons on 23rd of March. Present at the launch were former H-Block hunger-striker, Raymond McCartney and Mairead Uí hAdhmaill, whose husband, Feilim, is into the second year of his 25-year sentence in Full Sutton Prison in Yorkshire.

Explaining the aims of the Saoirse Campaign, Raymond pointed out that, "It is because of the conflict that we have prisoners, not the other way around. There cannot be a permanent and durable peace without the release of the prisoners. There is no escaping that".

The immediate priority for POWs held in England, however, remains their transfer back to jails in Ireland, which would reverse much of the emotional and financial stress that families have to endure in order to visit their loved ones. Mairead explained that, "It's so expensive every time I want to come over and see Feilim, but it's also very stressful. I've no idea if he's even going to be there - he may have

been transferred to another prison and I don't know how the visit will turn out, how he will be feeling that day. There's also the worry of the PTA. Both my sons and I were stopped and held for two hours on one visit. The threat is always there, ceasefire or no ceasefire. Lots of families are in the same position as me. They also have to endure the expense and harassment and wouldn't have to go through this if the prisoners were in Northern Ireland. All the statutory bodies in the North back the transfer, including the prison associations. I can see the transfers going ahead, not because the British authorities want to make the gesture, but because they will be pressurised into it.

"My children haven't seen their father since Christmas and the condition in the prison has deteriorated to such an extent that all the families are seriously worried."

After an initially slow start, the work is now under way to fulfil what Raymond described as "the need to build a public campaign" that would be able to get people on to the streets and (along with the on-going negotiations)

exhort the sort of pressure on the British government that would ensure the release of all Irish POWs.

Republicans have spoken of this being the final phase of the struggle, and with this in mind Red Action believes that we should all be attempting to inject a sense of urgency into our campaigning. The Brits have not given any guarantees over prisoners and are likely to stall on this issue for as long as possible. Our task therefore should be to build a high-profile public campaign capable of mobilising as many people as possible, to do so we must set about involving a largely untapped source of support; the estimated 8 million people in Britain who are either Irish or of Irish descent.

Though the PTA has not been set aside, its teeth have been drawn; the IRA ceasefire having radically altered the political status of the entire Irish community in Britain. As a direct consequence, for the first time in twenty years the Irish community can be directly and optimistically approached to re-involve themselves in the Irish question.

We believe that the Irish will 'come out' if



Saoirse manages to capture the imagination of the public and is able to accommodate individuals on the basis that everybody has a role to play. We intend to leaflet and mobilise within the large cultural events involving tens of thousands of people in London during the summer. On a long-term basis this may galvanise the Irish community in Britain into a powerful lobby similar to that of their counter-parts in the USA.

To those elements of the liberal/trotskyite left who have used the IRA's armed campaign as an excuse not to support the Irish struggle over the

past twenty-five years, we say that excuse no longer exists, you can no longer stand aside from the campaign for the release of Irish political prisoners.

Saoirse is a broad campaign with a role to play for everyone, whether that be petitioning, selling the green ribbons (the symbol of the Saoirse campaign), leafletting, fund-raising, letter-writing, organising meetings and pickets, lobbying various individuals, groups and organisations, as well as some more imaginative media stunts that will be taking place soon.

Help to build the campaign to free the Irish Prisoners of War.

Details of forth-coming Saoirse activities can be obtained by writing to Red Action, at BM Box 37, London, WC1N 3XX, or; Saoirse (London) PO Box 3923, London NW5 1RA.

Join Saoirse Now!

WELCOME RAYMOND



"It is because of the conflict that we have the prisoners, not the other way around," Ray McCartney, former IRA O/C Long Kesh, London Saoirse launch meeting (above on home leave).

SF Councillor Meets RA

Sinn Fein councillor Francie Molloy, who serves on Dungannon district council, Co. Tyrone, and is a member of Sinn Fein's Ard Comhairle, responsible for the co-ordination of their work in Britain, recently addressed a meeting of Red Action supporters and contacts from the London area. After outlining the present situation regarding the negotiations with the British Government the floor was then opened up to allow for questions. During the evening a lively debate was had on all aspects of the struggle, both in Ireland and Britain, with special emphasis given to solidarity work in this country, especially the newly launched Saoirse campaign. We would like to thank Francie for his time and for providing a valuable insight into current Republican thinking that ensured an extremely worthwhile meeting.

Loadsamoney!

A couple of hundred assorted republicans, Celtic fans and other activists, including Red Action members crammed into a London pub providing for an excellent evening and also for the more serious reason of raising funds for Republican POWs. During the evening there were a number of guest speakers including Maurice, brother of Nessan Quinlivan, Brixton Buster and now Portlaoise POW, who urged those present to give their full support to the London Saoirse Campaign. A second speaker read out a statement of solidarity from, and on behalf of, Volunteer Patrick Hayes, PRO Frankland Irish POWs. Congratulations are due to all the organisers of this very successful event.

In the Guardian on April 3, 1995, Roy Hattersley revealed to the paper's middle class readership what he really thinks of working class people, who, as the Left keep telling us, are the 'natural constituency' of the Labour Party.

Hattersley compares the working class to "the ugliest dog in the world." It's a stupid dog, "a relic of the old industrial poor. She would vote for me, whether or not I fed her on propriety tinned meat. So I could afford to neglect her."

Stupid and loyal - cut wages, put up rents, close schools - she'll still wag her tail and beg for more...She's an ugly mongrel, with none of the benefits of good breeding that Hattersley respects, and, in "biting the hand that only wishes to feed her, seems to be motivated by fear or anger."

So why, apart from the money, is Hattersley playing word games to tell his nice, Labour voting middle class readers about the "mongrels, puppies, whelps, hounds and curs of low degree" of the working class?

One of the reasons is simple. Labour is saying to its potential middle class voters: 'We hate the ugly bastards as much as you do; your instincts are our instincts. We are bigoted. You can trust us.' In a second article on 27/4/95, Hattersley writes of Labour's special relationship with the "least advantaged - and in many ways least attractive - members of society." Hattersley says that what the middle classes want is a "party of prudent compassion". And anyway, this isn't just a question of concern for the "sub-class in Britain's cities", it is important not only for "peace of mind", but also "urban tranquility".

This Dog's Life

What Hattersley is saying is simple. The sub-class "will undoubtedly vote Labour, whatever the party does." What may cause riots in Trafalgar Square under Major will be swallowed whole under Labour. "We live in an age of the almost universal middle class." There is now only a "small section of the population which...certainly needs the one true ingredient of genuine socialism - a more equal society."

So, Labour's big lie is: 'we're (almost) all equal now, and Tony Blair is the best man to deal with the beggars outside the Opera House.'

The real reason for Hattersley's gratuitous insult is straightforward - the Labour Party, under Tony Blair's 'new-style' leadership, is preparing for war. Labour has a massive lead over the Tories - well over 20% in every opinion poll - and has effectively ended the political existence of the Conservative Party in Scotland by ending its control of any aspect of local government.

But Labour's government in waiting isn't about to declare war on the British ruling-class. The target in Tony Blair's sights is much closer to home. For Blair - with the backing of such friends of the working-class as the Confederation of British Industries, The Financial Times, and right-wing columnist Paul Johnson - has declared Labour to be the "party of aspiration and ambition." The

ambition is to complete the job begun by the likes of Thatcher and Major here and by 'socialists' like Mitterand in France - to restore profitability for the ruling class at the working-classes expense, by cutting wages and social spending. When Blair declares at a conference organised by the Tory right's Spectator magazine that "Labour is going to eliminate the social evil of welfare dependency, what he's really saying is that Labour, put into office by working-class aspiration after 16 years of Tory rule, is about to declare war - on the working-class.

At the Spectator conference Blair set out his plans to attack the anti-social behaviour of school truants and "bad neighbours". With schools generally under-funded and consequently seriously under-equipped, Blair's response - fines for parents of truanting kids!

Council estates are rotting through years of disrepair, while homeless families generate millions for private landlords who run Bed and Breakfast hotels. Blair's promise - evictions for noisy neighbours.

The Labour Party's Commission on Social Justice has recently produced a report that states that the gap between the rich and poor is greater than at any time since the 1930s. Over 13 million live in poverty in the UK. Over 400,000 are officially homeless. The rich can expect to live 8 years longer

than the poor in the inner cities. One in thirteen homes in Britain is unfit to live in.

Labour's popularity stems from the fact that most people see Labour as the only means of bringing about change.

Labour's aspiration now is to be the party of "middle England". The next election will be fought around who can promise the biggest tax cut to the middle-classes. According to Blair, the Tories have betrayed the middle-classes "by hitting them with the biggest tax rises in peacetime history to pay the bills of economic failure." If Labour's bribe to the middle-classes is tax-cuts, someone - guess who - will have to pay. In Birmingham the Labour council set up a £20 million campaign called "Meeting Needs Across the City". According to a September 1994 Sunday Times report, money earmarked for "improving environmental conditions in areas of deprivation" was instead spent on putting 'sleeping policemen', street lights and pelican crossings in affluent suburbs, as a bribe to middle-class voters.

The Republican's election victories in the US recently came about as a result of their "Contract for America", calling for Congress to fight crime, cut taxes and increase military spending. It promises to discourage "illegitimacy" and teen pregnancy by denying



From the sanctuary of his Guardian column, Hattersley has launched gratuitous attacks on the working

welfare benefits to mothers under 21. It also promises to refuse to increase benefits to mothers who have children while out of work. At the same time, it promises a \$500 per child tax credit to the middle classes. The American ruling-class has decided that the poor are too costly and can either work in low-paid service jobs, work as slave labour in jail, or starve. Labour's new draft Clause 4 states that "the rights we enjoy must reflect the duties we owe." You can bet that an incoming Labour government will steal more than rhetoric from Republican America. An October Sunday Times article "Battle for the Middle Classes" reports a trade union leader at the Labour conference as follows: "Blair is surrounded by middle class advisers and I have no problem with that. Nowadays, union leaders are middle class. Look at me, I'm on more than £50,000 per year."

A measure of just how middle class trade union leaders have become can be seen from NUT leader Doug McAvoy's denunciation of teachers who called for (and won) a vote for a ballot for strike action against class-

room size as "louts and extremists". David Blunkett, Labour's Education Spokesman, has called for militant teachers to be sacked. A taste of employee/management relations under a Labour government? The left's response has been typically pathetic, confined to debating the question of Labour's constitution, not the working class' allegiance to Labour itself. Hilariously, Workers' Power continue to argue that the real fight is "to put Labour into office, then force them to meet our immediate demands." (WP April 95)

Back in the real world, the working class is left in a situation where neither mainstream politics nor the so-called left alternative have anything to say to them, or any interest in them. Increasingly alienated from all aspects of 'Official Society', but with life becoming harder, the working class are becoming more and more like their US counterparts, sidelined, excluded and forgotten.

In this case it should come as no surprise that they sometimes look to the only people who take notice of them; the BNP. The middle classes, having always dominated official politics, have now colonised all alternatives but the far-right. Working class people who have been on the receiving end of all the main parties can see that the BNP at least come from the same class and area. The far-right, in turn, are looking to the prospect of a Labour government with some relish. The task for working class militants is perfectly straight-forward - build a political alternative to the BNP, and a working class alternative to Labour. Only then will Hattersley's dog have its day.

VE day celebrations are still fresh in our mind, and why shouldn't they be, after all sections of the British media made sure we wouldn't be allowed to forget and we had television programmes and newspaper articles for a whole week leading up to the eighth of May.

We were regaled with heroic tales of English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, American, Russian, French, Dutch, Yugoslav, etc heroes who fought to rid their nations from an oppressive invading army. They fought gallantly against overwhelming odds, on land, sea and in the air to overthrow the fascist regime of Hitler's nazis and restore once more peace and democracy to the world, and rightly so!

We were reminded how the jackbooted stormtroopers of the Wehrmacht and Waffen SS marched uninvited into almost every capital of Europe, destroying everyone and everything who stood in their path and raising the swastika as they went. Much was made of the partisans, freedom fighters, resistance movements' attempts in these capitals to thwart their oppressors, and rightly so!

These attempts consisted of blowing up bridges, factories, shipyards, airstrips, and cafes and bars frequented by the occupation forces in attempt to slow down the German war machine. Not only were German soldiers seen as targets, but also collaborators, be it German controlled politicians, policemen, militias and informers. For these acts Resistance fighters were awarded medals for gallantry and bravery, and rightly so!

The only voices raised against those who fought so hard for deliverance from their countries oppressors was the oppressor and their puppet regimes. The Nazi tag of 'terrorists' did nothing to destroy the many resistance movements in the Occupied Countries, nor did it dismay Tito's partisans, and why should it? They were fighting to rid themselves of a heavily armed enemy with superior manpower and firepower who had come uninvited into their countries and oppressed their people. Fair play to them!

Now, no doubt you can see where all this is leading, yes you're right, I do intend to show the similarities between those countries occupied fifty years ago and Occupied Ireland today. It is quite obvious who are the oppressors and who are the freedom fighters in my country, so this time I intend to take a wing at one of the Brit's puppet regimes, no not the Unionists, but these unapproachable, unbribe-able, upright British-paid members of FAIT.

Families Against Intimidation and Terror, where were these people at the height of the RUC's campaign of intimidation and terror, when they arrested, tortured and jailed nationalist youths? No, there was no outcry at the RUC taking our youngsters hostage. No cry of 'Justice!' for the Beechmount 5 or Ballymurphy 7. The reason for their silence is obvious, it is not in their brief to get involved in issues that might cause embarrassment to their masters. It is their job to pour scorn on their own, to make sure everything positive done by nationalists, and to some extent loyalists, is discredited.

It is possible, I suppose, that a few genuine people may have been induced into this 'organisation', but if so, what keeps them in it? Could it be that they see FAIT as the true heir of the Peace People, a discredited British-funded group that collapsed when greed split the leadership? Or is it the old Irish adage that if you walk down the street banging your drum loud enough then a bunch of 'buck cejts' is bound to fall in behind with you? With British funding and a few shrewd people to lead them, then these 'buck cejts' can become a dangerous addition to the equation, as FAIT's masters know.

When Bill Clinton granted a visa to Gerry Adams allowing him to visit America in the wake of the IRA ceasefire, the British propaganda machine went into over-drive. The British gutter press ignored the

dispatches from a war zone



Paris, 1944. French terrorists confront security forces - a collaborator's perspective

frauds, sexual deviances and blatant racism of their ruling classes to attack Clinton's decision. Never one to miss a trick, the propaganda machine decided to load one more base, Dublin airport.

Using General Freeland's tactic of using 'counter-insurgents' to discredit activists, FAIT's masters made sure they were at Dublin airport to meet Adams on his arrival from America. FAIT members were only too willing to get their blue-ribbons and executive haircuts on TV, and with emotions still running high they invited a few relatives of those killed in the Shankill bombing along to shout at Adams. Nice one, Nancy and Henry, did you think of that one yourselves or was it a brief from your masters?

For nine months now the British have tried every weapon in their arsenal to stall the peace process, and next to the decommissioning of IRA arms (boy, are they pissing into the wind!), the issue of so-called 'IRA punishment beatings' is at the fore, and who is out there waving placards and strutting their stuff for the British, that's right, Nancy and Hen and co.

Could it just be a coincidence that at any meetings between British and Sinn Fein representatives, or Irish government and Sinn Fein representatives, that not only is it a media circus, but you can be sure at least half a dozen of the Blue Rinse Brigade are there to heckle and harangue Sinn Fein members? Or is it a staged situation where Paddy Mayhew and other NIO ministers can point a finger and declare, "if their own can't trust them, how can we?"

During World War 2 the Germans used torture and coercion to turn suspected resistance fighters against their comrades (a tactic also synonymous with the RUC). When these informers were rooted out by the resistance they were executed without hesitation. There could be no reluctance in executing informers as to let them go would mean the death of that resistance movement. If the informer was working willingly for the Germans, he/she could only be treated as an enemy soldier, and many informers were hanged from trees with placards round their necks to dissuade others.

The only people likely to speak out against such acts were either members of the German war machine or members of its puppet regimes

In this present phase of Irish Struggle the IRA/INLA have had to execute informers, and on every occasion I remember them having to do so, the bodies of the informers were left in the open as a warning to others. The IRA/INLA, knowing that many informers were working because of threats against them or their families by the 'security forces', offered many amnesties to people under pressure to inform. Such an amnesty would be offered each time an informer was executed.

To inform on friends and neighbours is wrong in any society, but in Ireland it is anathema. People are quick to disassociate themselves from a former friend and in some cases relative, who have been found

to be working for the British. An informer's funeral would usually be low-key and not well-attended.

I find it strange, then, that FAIT came out into the open last week and demanded the return of two informers they allege the IRA had executed and buried in a South Armagh bog. Now, I don't know where FAIT gets its information from (or should that be disinformation) but I could hazard a guess. Nod, nod, wink, wink.

I do, however, remember that the two people named by FAIT, Seamus Wright and Kevin McKee, were members of the IRA in the Lower Falls area of Belfast. In 1972 Seamus Wright came under suspicion by the IRA due to his frequent absences from the area. Under interrogation he admitted to working for the British and implicated Kevin McKee. Both men admitted that they were being trained by a secret unit of British Intelligence, the MRU (Military Reaction Unit). Rumour has it that when both men were picked up by the IRA they were armed with pistols supplied by their Intelligence handlers.

Both men told the IRA that they along with other renegade IRA men were being trained at Palace Barracks by the MRU (SAS?) to destroy the IRA from within. As a unit, and armed by its handlers, they engaged in bombings and shootings in Nationalist areas of West Belfast designed to destroy local support for the IRA. With the capture of these two agents the MRU ploy failed, as did another MRU operation in the Twinbrook estate, when an IRA unit ambushed a team of undercover soldiers acting under the guise of collectors for a bogus laundry firm.

No-one knows for sure what happened to Wright and McKee. Some say that they were seen moving quite freely around Armagh weeks after they had been picked up. Others say that they were executed for their crime of selling out their comrades. I have even heard that the two men were involved in planting a no-warning bomb in a West Belfast bar, which exploded killing a civilian. Local people were meant to believe that the device was an IRA bomb which had exploded prematurely in transit.

I have absolutely no doubt in my mind that had these men been French Resistance fighters working for the Germans to kill and discredit the Resistance Movement what their fate would have been. Their bodies would have swinged from Paris lamp-posts, and I sincerely doubt that anyone would have claimed their bodies. Imagine the hue and cry there would have been from British ex-servicemen if the new far-right, the neo-nazis, in Germany today had demanded the remains of Hitler and Himmler, or if the fascists in Italy today were to ask for the remains of Mussolini, to be given a christian burial.

In all conflicts there are those who will throw their lot in with the enemy. Some do it out of spite, others for financial gain. Fifty years ago they were Fifth Columnists; in today's parlance, they are counter-gangs. Fifty years ago it was Lord Haw-Haw and Tokyo Rose; today in Ireland it is groups like FAIT.

Until such times as this country has an unbiased and non-sectarian police force which can be trusted by the whole of our community then 'punishment beatings' are an inevitability.

It is the lack of trust in a discredited and openly sectarian force, the RUC, which drives local communities to the punitive measures they exact on those who are breaking into their homes, stealing their cars, endangering their children's lives as they use their streets as racetracks in stolen cars, push drugs, and generally bring their areas into disrepute and make them no-go areas for local residents young and old.

In the past, rather than deal with young offenders from nationalist areas, uniformed RUC officers thought it more expedient to coerce them into informing about friends and neighbours to their Special Branch colleagues, and in return a blind eye could be turned to their crimes.

The RUC's reasons for this tactic were twofold. Firstly, it generated low-level key information on activists in areas where uniformed and undercover police officers could not move freely. In this scenario, it was the lives of petty criminals, who in the eyes of the RUC and their political masters were more than expendable, and not those of RUC members which hung in the balance in the event of discovery.

Secondly, while these criminals were continuing their activities, with the unofficial sanction of those who were meant to be stopping them, they were also generating black propaganda for the RUC. One only has to look at how the RUC harped constantly on about how many hundreds of stolen cars they were recovering annually from West Belfast. I suppose they haven't bothered keeping statistics on the number of residents who rang them to inform them that joyriders were using their streets as racetracks or burning cars they had got bored with.

The usual response to these phone calls from the RUC was that they

graffiti covered walls, broken lamp posts etc. Just to give the impression that if the people who lived here threw the IRA/INLA men out of their midst then the RUC could tackle these social issues.

In the areas affected, however, it had the reverse effect. Residents, seeing the RUC's refusal to tackle local crime, turned to local activists in the hope that they could rid them of the criminals. I can only assume that the role of local policing was taken on reluctantly as it detracted from the IRA/INLA's real objective of confronting the British Army and RUC, but since their mandate came from local people their pleas for help could not go unheeded.

The RUC, never slow to seize an opportunity, used the media to decry the "barbaric" and "inhumane" practice of kneecapping, a term deliberately fabricated by the RUC to give the impression that the victims of such shootings had been shot through the kneecap and crippled. If this had been the case, how come so many joyriders who have shot two or three times by the IRA/INLA are still appearing in court today? Oh, incidentally, the RUC front men who informed us of the brutality and inhumanity of the punishment shootings conveniently forgot to mention that their force and the British Army used a policy of summary execution of joyriders when the craze they first turned a blind eye to reached epidemic proportions.

Now that the only guns in evidence in this country are in the hands of the RUC, the legacy of another failed policy, that of ghettoisation has come back to haunt them. The people of the areas in which the RUC allowed crime to run rampant do not believe that a force who so blatantly and so corruptly turned their backs on their communities in order to win points for their political masters can ever be relied upon to fulfill the role of public protectors.

Is it any wonder then that local communities have taken it upon themselves to protect their own areas, property and persons from the thugs and thieves into whose



areas, filming the burnt out cars, etc, creating the impression that if the community drove the IRA/INLA out then the RUC could tackle these social issues.

could not send vehicles to check out such reports as it might be an IRA/INLA trap to lure their officers into an ambush. This response was meant to throw the blame for the wanton destruction out of the RUC's court and firmly into the court of local activists. The same response was not reserved, however, for the middle-class areas of Belfast, or the money-belt areas such as Cultra, Saintfield etc. Someone walking in those areas who so much as looked out of place was guaranteed to be looking down the barrels of a dozen RUC guns before they had walked too far, the reason for this that for their 'ghettoisation tactic' to work they had to ensure that the criminals stayed in their ghetto, and not stray out to amoy 'decent people'.

The 'ghettoisation' tactic worked to a certain degree. It had the desired effect on people from outside the so-called ghetto. Compliant journalists would drive daily round these areas, filming the burnt out cars, vandalised and vacant buildings strewn with empty alcohol containers and glue-bags, the

hands the RUC delivered these areas? Now that there is the chance of peace in Ireland the rank and file members of the RUC are in a panic. They know that they now have to go into these areas and return to 'normal' policing. A lot of RUC officers are going to lose their jobs as the peace process proceeds. Their political masters want nationalist people to accept the RUC, so the velvet glove goes back on, but it is no good.

Until the RUC is disbanded and a police force representative of all parts of our community put in its place then people will continue to look out for themselves and their own. The IRA/INLA can no longer shoot or beat these criminals as it would be seen by the British as a violation of the ceasefire, so local communities rather than be overrun by crime have taken it upon themselves the right to punish those who offend against them. Such is the result of another failed RUC policy. M.Collins, Belfast.



Nancy Gracey, Blue Rinse commander

Marx and Engels STREETFIGHTING MEN

The organisations of the Leninist, Trotskyite and Anarchist left, without even the slightest hint of either irony or honesty have, in the past 25 years, promoted the most reactionary, divisive and anti socialist policy in relation to the conflict in the six counties. While claiming to theoretically support the republican struggle these groups have in fact contributed nothing to practically aid the struggle of the nationalist working class in the North.

The line adopted by 'socialist' and 'anarchist' factions in relation to the war in the 6 counties has put them beyond the pale of ever having any influence on Republican thinking. The arrogance of middle class 'revolutionaries' preaching to working class volunteers via the barely comprehensible jargon of left wing journals has ensured that their

'socialist ideals' have not made any advance within Republicanism in Ireland. This appears most notably in their inability to recognise the reality of the working class creating their own anti-Imperialist struggle without reference to high theory or gurus.

The position of the groups which adopted a policy of 'critical but not unconditional', 'unconditional but not uncritical' and other such semantic opt-out clauses in relation to the Republican struggle allowed these factions to claim theoretical support for the IRA while roundly condemning its actual military actions. Such abstractions lead one to wonder if they expected the IRA to conduct a poll of every irrelevant sect prior to each operation. Such opportunist strategies and theoretical gymnastics having proved totally ineffectual in the abstract. These

groups have never seen the necessity to provide any practical assistance to the nationalist population of the 6 counties, apart from the occasional party building exercise which has the predictable effect of alienating any republican they might inadvertently come in contact with.

More importantly, on the point of Marxist theory itself, 'socialist' publications from any of leftist groups, the Trotskyite sects in particular, constantly divide propaganda on Marx's writings from any explanation of his actual political practise. One could be genuinely excused for believing that Marx never left the reading room of the British museum and that in his lifetime Marx did not engage in any practical political activism. In fact this misapprehension is completely untrue and nowhere is the writing and actual political practise of Marx

(and Engels) of greater relevance than in their work on the Irish Question.

Theory

At an early stage of his political development Marx was in favour of Ireland having autonomy within the union with Britain and believed that the solution to the oppression of the Irish would come through a victory of the English working class over capitalism. By the late 1860s his political thought had matured and he came to see the liberation of Ireland as a pre condition for the revolutionary success of the English proletariat. This opinion was based on three interconnected themes which were important for the future development of the Marxist theory of national self determination and its dialectical relationship with proletarian internationalism. These were, (1) That only the national liberation of the oppressed nation enables national divisions and antagonism to be overcome and permits the working class of both countries to unite against their common oppressors, the capitalists. (2) The oppression of another nation helps to reinforce the ideological hegemony of the bourgeoisie over the working class of the oppressor nation, in the form of the development of national chauvinism. 'Any nation that oppresses another forges its own chains' and (3) The emancipation of the oppressed nation weakens the economic, political, military and ideological bases of the dominating classes in the oppressor nation and this contributes to the revolutionary struggle of the working class in that country.

Thus it can be seen that Marx's support for revolutionary separatism in Ireland was fully compatible with the ideals of proletarian internationalism. The rejection of the right to national self determination by

'Marxist' and Anarchist groups, with their contemptuous characterisation of the Republican struggle as 'bourgeois nationalism', has no basis at all in Marx's writings. It comes from Rosa Luxembourg - and she was commenting almost exclusively on Eastern Europe, specifically on Poland's relationship with the Russian Empire. She opposed Polish independence from Russia on a large number of grounds, one of which was that the Polish working class were benefiting from the Russian connection, and another that the desire for independence was an aspiration of the feudal remnants of the Polish upper classes. She later changed her line on national self determination to one closer to Marxist orthodoxy. Whether Luxembourg was correct or not in her arguments on Poland is not relevant here, what is is that lefty groups have adopted a theory that had relevance in one scenario and superimposed it - retrospectively - onto Marx, and then attempted to build a policy on Ireland based on this deception. Being an Internationalist does not mean that one can automatically transfer the political, historical, economic and national experiences of one nation, or section thereof, onto another in a vain attempt to create an homogeneous international proletariat. But of course this is the trap that populist leftism and Trotskyism inevitably falls into for the single reason that it's Euro centric bourgeois orientated ideology is unable to comprehend any reality outside of its own theoretical introspection.

Practise

Engels visited Ireland on a number of occasions, sending back vivid reports on the condition of the country in the aftermath of the Famine. Engels had a strong interest in the Irish question and made some interesting observations. He recognised the revolutionary potential of the mobilisation of the workers and the peasantry through the Repeal campaign in the 1840s, which was aimed at getting a parliament in Ireland, but stopped short of complete independence.

"What people! They haven't a penny to lose, more than half of them have not a shirt to their back, they are real proletarians and sans culottes, and Irish besides - wild ungovernable fanatical Gaels... If I had two hundred thousand Irish I could overturn the whole British monarchy"

The practical possibilities of the revolutionary movement of Fenianism focused the attention of Marx and Engels on Ireland in the 1860s. They were attracted to the Fenian movement because of its working class composition, anti-clericalism and 'socialistic tendency'. The Fenian movement was a secret Republican conspiracy to overthrow British rule in Ireland through armed action. It's greatest period of strength was in the 1860's but a planned rebellion failed and the organisation was destroyed at this time by arrests and informers. However Fenianism remained an important underground movement in Ireland and America up until the 1916 Rising, the leaders all being Fenians.

During the 1860s Marx and Engels put forward the arguments for independence for Ireland in the 1st International and discussed the situation in their letters.

"England never has, and never can, so long as the present relation lasts, rule Ireland otherwise than by the most abominable reign of terror and the most reprehensible corruption." (Marx to Engels, 1869).

At the foundation of the International Workingmen's Association in 1864 Ireland was listed as one of the countries in which British policy was to be condemned. In 1866 the First

International took the side of the Fenians against attacks in the English press. When O'Donovan Rossa and other Fenians were arrested the International urged all its sections to organise protests.

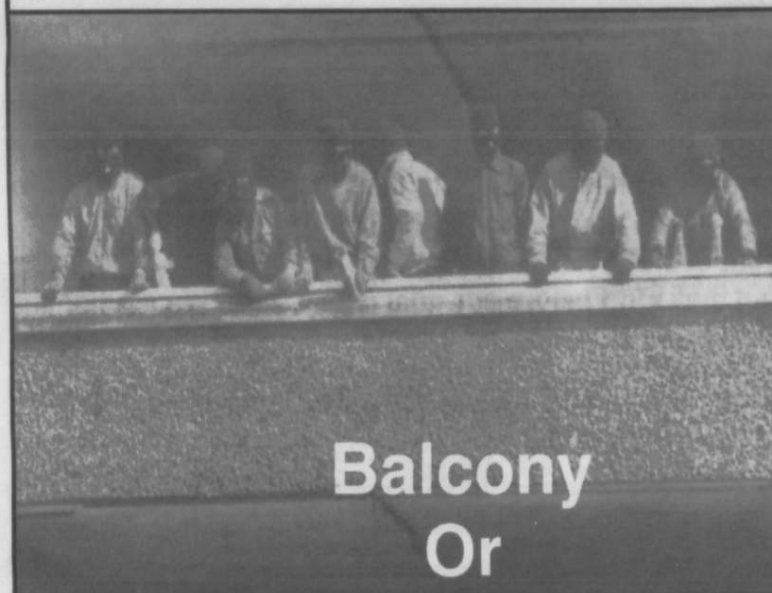
In 1867 Marx strongly attacked the vicious treatment meted out to Fenian prisoners in English jails and the International sent a letter of protest to the Home Secretary. The Council of the International organised a public debate on Ireland which attracted large crowds of workers. Some of the speakers defended the killing of a policeman during a prisoners escape in Manchester and the council launched a campaign on the innocence of the men facing trial for this offence. In the same year, Engels wrote:

"The London proletarians declare every day more openly for the Fenians and, hence - an unheard of and splendid thing here - for, first a violent and, secondly an anti-English movement" (Engels, 1867)

William Leibnecht, a close friend of Engels, claimed that Engels had safe housed escaped Fenian prisoners but obviously there is no documentary evidence of this. It is known that Engels made large financial donations to Irish revolutionaries. His partner, Lizzie Burns, was an Irish republican and is believed to have had a big influence on him in relation to Ireland.

The International in both England and America raised large funds for Fenian prisoners and issued a special appeal to Irish working women to send donations to the 'Irish People', the Fenian paper, in Dublin.

'The London proletarians declare every day more openly for the Fenians and, hence - an unheard of and splendid thing here - for, first a violent and, secondly an anti-English movement'



**Balcony
Or
Baloney?**



Faced with a choice between balcony or baloney, Marx and Engels would have had no hesitation.

(Below) Labour leaders Neil Kinnock and Kevin McNamara being presented with a plaque - "The cause of Ireland is the cause of Labour, and the cause of Labour is the cause of Ireland",

Labour's policy on Ireland is merely a variation on the 'critical but not unconditional, unconditional but not uncritical' favoured by the British Left.

Collecting sheets were circulated by the International to all trade union branches throughout Britain. The Reform League, an organisation of English workers, organised a mass meeting in Hyde Park calling for the release of Fenian prisoners. This was the first time that English workers had publicly demonstrated with their Irish counterparts in support of Independence for Ireland. In October 1869 a meeting in Hyde Park, calling for an amnesty for the Fenian prisoners, attracted a huge crowd with estimates varying from 40,000 to 120,000. This was organised by JP Mc Donnell, a Fenian and soon to be elected to the General Council of the International and secretary for Ireland.

During the 1869 election campaign of O'Donovan Rossa, who ran as a prison candidate and was elected MP for Tipperary, the Church issued a direction from Rome ordering priests to oppose Fenian candidates and not to sign the amnesty petition. The motivation of nationalists and the church was to prevent the growth of an independent republican and communist influenced organisation.

In a public speech to the International Marx attacked the Liberal policy of radical 'reform' for Ireland (while in opposition) and repression (while in government). The vast majority of the delegates who spoke supported an amnesty for the Fenian prisoners, the only dissenters being three notoriously reformist trade union leaders. The motion was passed unanimously. The wording of the resolution was sent to all of the several hundred trade unions affiliated to the International and only one small branch objected. When a delegation explained the policy fully this branch also accepted it. In the late 19th century the policy of the vast majority of reformist 'socialists' in Britain was openly pro imperialist.



William Leibneckt (above), a close friend of Engels, claimed that Engels had safe housed escaped Fenian prisoners

previous exchange of private correspondence between Marx and Engels reveals that they did not personally support the Fenian bombing campaign in England, believing that it would turn public opinion in Britain against the Fenians. However it would appear that, unlike socialist sects today, they did not extrapolate private opinions into political positions which would have the effect of undermining the cause being promoted by exposing the weakness and vacillation of 'revolutionaries' through their public acceptance of establishment propaganda.

The International in Ireland

in that their view of a future socialist society was bound up with capitalist conceptions of the role of the British empire in bringing enlightenment to lesser races through the greatness of British industry.

The practical effect of the support for the Irish struggle by the leaders of world socialism was the expansion of the International into Ireland. Branches were formed in Cork and Dublin with attempts at organisation in Belfast, Limerick and other centres. Irish branches were also formed in Irish working districts in English towns, particularly in London.

The Cork branch, founded in 1872, had five hundred members, including trade unions. In Cork it was reported that the International 'won the backing of many of the oldest and most respected advocates of Irish independence'. The Cork Examiner, the editor a brother of the local bishop, reported the International branch as a plot 'hatched between English and Continental atheists'.

There was an immediate clamp down on the activities of the International in Ireland, with the blacklisting of members and continuous armed police surveillance.

The church launched a red scare campaign which intensified in 1871, after the Paris Commune, with allegations that the members of the International in Paris had murdered priests and bishops. The catholic church in Cork mobilised sections of the working class against the International with claims that it's members in Paris had murdered priests. A riot ensued at a meeting in support of strikers, attended by 3,000.

"A Commune meeting in Cork was attacked by a fanatical crowd, but the hundreds of workers present gave such an account of themselves that the superstition mongers had to run for their lives".

These Irish workers had recognised that the motivation of the police, employers and the church in their hostility to the International was due to its success in removing the national antagonism that had been fostered as an impediment to the unity of the Irish and English working class and which was the mainstay of the establishment in maintaining class domination in both countries.

In the long term the effect of clerical, press and state censure ensured that the International branches did not survive for very long in Ireland. The fact that the International itself was in decline before the establishment of the Irish branches did not auger well for the future. The most important lesson to be learned from the growth of the International in Ireland is that the influence of socialism came through the active and practical involvement of communists in support of a republican campaign, not via abstract polemicising on the ideological short comings of the Fenian movement.

Aid given to Irish working class revolutionaries and political and financial support for prisoners of war from socialist groups both in Ireland and abroad must not be just paper policy, platitudes or excuses but on direct assistance as in that rendered by Marx, Engels and the 1st International to the revolutionary separatists of the 19th century, the Fenians. No group can claim to be Marxist if it does otherwise.

Marx however was not satisfied with mere paper resolutions and embarked on a sustained publicity campaign to make the plight of the prisoners known throughout Europe and America. 20 prisoners had either died or gone insane as a result of the brutal treatment they endured. Marx was in direct contact with the Fenians, especially Mrs O Donovan Rossa. In newspaper articles Marx denigrated Gladstone, the British Prime Minister and the liberals by comparing the Irish prisoners' conditions to those suffered by the political opponents of dictators such as Emperor Napoleon III in France and the Tsar of Russia. Gladstone, through the English press, launched a counter propaganda campaign, a

London ns declare more openly nians and, unheard of ndid thing rst a violent dly an anti- ovement'

sure sign that Marx's efforts were working. Marx's daughter, Jenny, an important socialist activist in her own right, engaged in a series of correspondence refuting the counter propaganda of the Liberals. A number of her letters appeared in the major French paper "La Marseillaise" and were republished all over Europe, eventually the English capitalist papers could no longer maintain the government's conspiracy of silence regarding the Irish prisoners. Gladstone's campaign had backfired badly and he was forced to call a Commission of Enquiry which led to the release of most of the Fenian prisoners on condition that they did not return to Ireland.

In 1872 the Hague Congress of the International, representing workers from 13 nationalities, approved a resolution strongly condemning the treatment of Fenian prisoners by the Liberal government. JP Mc Donnell wrote a letter to Gladstone based on the International decision in which he constantly refers to the Fenians as political prisoners and rejects claims that they were common criminals:

'even the most hostile to Ireland have not dared to accuse...the Irish political prisoners of any 'crime' except that of conspiring for the destruction of long standing evils and the establishment of a free and independent form of Republican government for Ireland'.

On the issue of Fenian 'terrorism' the letter comments

'the generous and humane conduct which characterised the general actions of the Fenians in the most trying circumstances, a conduct which most revolutionists would consider far too generous, if not Quixotic, on behalf of a people in revolt.' (RA emphasis)

This is interesting because a

The Left's Priorities Need to be Reversed

Contrary to the placard politics of the Leninist/Trotskyist left, the revolutionary movements and struggles that inspire Marx's most passionate writings are manifested in the direct action of street fighting, armed struggle and barricades as in 1789, 1848 and 1871. As early as 1846, Engels defines the objective of the "Communists" as inspiring "a democratic revolution by force." Marx, in a contemporary letter, declares that social conflict can only be resolved through "the real and violent action of the masses." In the course of a discussion of the events of 1848, Engels refers to the workers' "own sphere of action - the street."

This language is not intended as the abstract 'crushing' and 'smashing' beloved of today's lefty rhetoric. Marx means it. Writing of a workers' demonstration in 1866, Marx complains to a correspondent: "Matters were indeed hanging on a thread. If the railings - and it was touch and go - had been used offensively against the police and about twenty of the latter had been killed, the military would have had to 'intervene' instead of only parading. And then there would have been some fun. One thing is certain, these thick-headed John Bulls, whose skulls seem to have been specially manufactured for the constables' truncheons, will never get anywhere without a really bloody encounter with those in power..." The language might not be politically correct, but the sentiments are clear. They could hardly be in greater contrast to the key utterance of modern left politics in Britain: Steve Nally of the Militant's gut reaction to the media that he was prepared to 'name names' after a few windows etc were put through during the Poll Tax riot.

One of the principal demands of the Communist Manifesto and of the founding statement of the International (written by Marx) is that all workers should be armed. This call for the "independent and armed organisation of the workers" was consistently repeated by both Marx and Engels throughout their political writings. Indeed, the true revolutionary significance of the 1848 revolutions was summarised as, "throwing before the eyes of the astonished liberal middle-classes of Europe the giant spectre of an armed working class."

In discussing the Franco-German war of 1870, Marx comments that: "however the war may end, it has given the French proletariat practice in arms, and that is the best guarantee of the future..."

The truth of this observation was to be made clear almost immediately during the armed insurrection of the Parisian workers in 1871. In a speech given to the International after the defeat of the Paris commune, Marx drew the lesson that before the socialist organisation of production could be accomplished, "a proletarian dictatorship would become necessary, and the first of this would be a proletarian army. The working class would have to conquer the right to emancipate themselves on the battlefield".

Even defeats sustained in the course of an armed struggle must be considered as productive. As Marx wrote during the existence of the Commune itself, the Parisian workers were presented "with the alternative of either taking up the fight or succumbing without a struggle. The demoralisation of the working class in the latter case would have been a far greater misfortune than the doom of any number of 'leaders'. With the struggle in Paris, the struggle of the working class against the capitalist class and its state has entered a new phase."

Marx saw the ultimate task of the International as organising forces of

labour for a struggle of this kind. Later, in 1873, Engels argued against the anarchists in his article 'On Authority', that in the case of a victorious workers' state such as the Paris Commune, "if the victorious party does not want to have fought in vain, it must maintain this rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries".

This lesson had in part already been conveyed by the experiences of 1848. Marx wrote: "The fruitless massacres since the June and October days...the cannibalism of the counter-revolution itself will convince the peoples that there is only one way to shorten, simplify, and condense the death-pangs of the old society and the bloody birth-pangs of the new society - only one way: revolutionary terrorism." After the eventual victory of reaction, Marx wrote in reference to future struggles:

"We are merciless: we ask for no mercy from you. When our turn comes, we will make no excuses for terrorism."

If it is thought that this language of the "sword" is to some extent metaphorical, it is useful to quote Engels' famous statement on the matter: "A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is an act whereby one part of the population imposes its will on the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannons...it must maintain this rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries." Unwillingness to implement authoritarian measures (which of course in no way implies that they are opposed to the democratic rule of the working classes) results in catastrophe and defeat:

"I know of nothing more authoritarian than a revolution, and when one's will is imposed on others with bombs and bullets, as in every revolution, it seems to me an act of authority is being committed. It was the lack of centralisation and authority that cost the Paris Commune its life."

The necessity for revolutionary violence extended beyond the immediate revolutionary period to the defence of the workers' state. Marx was explicit (in opposition to the anarchist Bakunin) that "terrorism" had ultimately to take a state form; "as long as the other classes, especially the capitalist class, still exist, as long as the proletariat fights against them...it must employ forcible means, hence governmental means; it is still itself a class, and the economic conditions on which the class struggle is based along with the existence of classes, have not yet disappeared; they must be cleared forcibly out of the way or transformed, and their process of transformation forcibly hastened." More specifically still, he stated that: "The communal organisation once firmly established...the catastrophes it might still have to undergo would be sporadic slave holders' insurrections, which while for a moment interrupting the work of peaceful progress, would

only accelerate the moment by putting the sword in the hand of the social revolution."

Engels asks rhetorically: "Would the Paris Commune have lasted a single day if it had not made use of this authority of the armed people against the bourgeois?" Obviously not. It follows that, "When I am told that authority and centralisation are two things that should be condemned under all possible circumstances [as by the anarchists] it seems to me that those who say so either do not know what a revolution is or are revolutionaries in name only."

The argument is nicely illustrated by an incident preceding the formation of the Paris Commune itself. In September 1870, Bakunin and a few other anarchists entered the City Hall in Lyon in the wake of a working class insurrection and "installed himself there" in the words of a pamphlet written jointly by Marx and Engels. Tempting fate, the first words of Bakunin's decree were, "The administrative and governmental machine of the state, having become impotent, is abolished!"

Marx and Engels take up the story: "Then came the critical moment, the moment awaited for so many years, when Bakunin would carry out the most revolutionary act the world has ever seen - he decreed the Abolition of the State. But the state, in the form of two companies of bourgeois National Guards, swept the hall, and set Bakunin hurrying back on the road to Geneva."

The anarchists 'abolish' the state. Unfortunately, the state doesn't agree to be abolished and 'abolishes' the anarchists instead.

Given that Marxism stresses the primacy of the economic forces and the determining power of economic relations, how is it that both Marx and Engels are explicit in urging the necessity of political, armed struggle against the capitalist state? Near the end of his life, Engels gave a concise answer: "Why then do we fight for the political dictatorship of the proletariat, if political power is economically powerless? Force (ie state power) is also an economic power!"

The primacy of direct, violent and centralised action against the capitalist state as both a means of revolution against capital, and as a means of defending an independently working class state during the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is therefore, abundantly supported by both Marx and Engels. The Marxist credentials for the primacy of direct action and armed struggle against the forces of the bourgeois state as opposed to economic struggles focused on the workplace, should need no further argument.

The historically established priorities of the conservative left need to be reversed.



Celtic Fans Against Fascism

Celtic Anti-Fascists was set up a few months ago but it is the culmination of activities that have been going on for at least a couple of years. The first problems of racism at Celtic were a few years ago during the 'Souness Era' at Rangers when they signed the black winger, Mark Walters. At the first Old Firm game involving Walters, Celtic fans threw bananas on to the park and Walters was greeted with monkey noises every time he touched the ball. It became apparent that anti-racism was not an automatic choice for Celtic fans, despite their progressiveness on other issues like Ireland and the Falklands War (Celtic supporters used to chant 'Argentina' when the conflict was at its height and many in the Jungle section took to wearing Argentina football jerseys).

With the club itself coming out strongly against the racist chanting, fanzines like Not The View (NTV) toed the liberal line. Their anti-racism was confined to the liberal appeals to be 'nice to your neighbour' rather than providing any practical means by which fans

could confront the racists and beat them. As long as the middle class students who produce NTV weren't racist themselves was all that seemed to matter. It was left to individual fans to confront those responsible for the racist chants in a more direct way. Red Action members at the football were frequently involved in stand-offs with those responsible for the monkey noises. Even after NTV developed links with the St.Pauli fans in Hamburg, they failed to produce a single piece of anti-racist propaganda except for the occasional utterances about racism being a 'bad thing'.

It was not until the emergence of the pro-Republican Tiofaidh Ar La (TAL) fanzine that the issue was seriously tackled. TAL placed the racism in the context of the general rise of the right in Europe and pointed out that there was no room for complacency even at clubs like Celtic. TAL's success also lay in placing the fans' racism in another context - the majority of Celtic fans are second and third generation Irish emigrants. The Irish themselves experienced

much racism and abuse. Indeed, what is commonly referred to as 'sectarianism' in the West of Scotland is actually the legacy of the discrimination and hatred shown towards Irish Catholics. The fact that fascists find a more receptive atmosphere at Rangers is also part of this legacy of discrimination, of 'tuppence ha'penny looking down on tuppence'. The fascists recruit at Ibrox because they already had a foot in the door as a result of years of loyalism and orangeism - not because of anything that anti-fascists have done at Celtic!

Similarly, despite the occasional outbursts of racism such as those against Walters, the political atmosphere at Celtic is very much on the left. Celtic fans have a close association with Ireland and, as a result, there are thousands of Celtic fans who have a tremendous sympathy for Republicanism. TAL became an expression of these sympathies and linked the experience of the Irish in Scotland with the progressive politics of Republicanism and anti-fascism. It was, therefore, a natural progression that when enough support had been built, that those fans who felt strongly enough should get together to form Celtic Anti-Fascists. It is important to note, especially for those who are following similar developments at other clubs, that the groundwork had been done over three years before the organisation was formed.

Such is the general atmosphere that has been developed at Celtic that when lefties like the ANL and YRE have turned up to exploit the situation, they have been largely ignored because they were clearly seen as outsiders and opportunists. When the ANL leafletted for

the Welling demo, many supporters were saying, "You don't need to tell us about the nazis, we're already against them!" Ironically, those Celtic casuals who did travel from Glasgow to Welling with the SWP and Militant (some of them are still being processed through the courts) had their views of the left as being middle class and gutless confirmed. The SWP, on the other hand, probably had their worst fears - of the working class as being independent, violent and further to the left than the so-called 'revolutionaries' - confirmed as well. As a result, the only contact between the lefties and the Celtic boys since has been when Militant and SWP have attempted to discourage them from any involvement with Red Action - wrecking tactics!

Celtic Anti-Fascists now needs to develop its links with supporters' clubs and is currently producing a charter aimed at securing further support for its approach to racism and fascism. Around 30,000 'Celtic Fans Against Fascism' stickers have been sold and distributed and provide a regular source of mail from the far-flung corners of Glasgow to more exotic locations in Europe and further afield where they have been spotted on lamp-posts. The CAF banner is a regular feature at the big games and racist abuse of black players is quickly shouted down and dealt with. We know that there are still some problems but they are minimal compared to even three years ago. One thing is for

certain, the fans would never be able to mount any sort of campaign at Celtic. If they ever came near the ground they would get the shit kicked out of them.

Other knock-on benefits have been a steady flow of Celtic fans joining AFA in various parts of Scotland and England. During the riot by England fans in Dublin recently, those foremost among the Irish fans trying to get at the English fascists - aside from RA members - were lads who travel over regularly to see Celtic.

As the Red Action speaker at the last Celtic Anti-Fascists benefit gig said: "In 1992, many central London stations, including Waterloo and Charing Cross were closed 'due to riots' as AFA fought running battles with Blood and Honour skinheads and right wing football casuals. One of the main men at Millwall suffered a heart attack. For the first time, football casuals that day fought alongside the anti-fascists.

Fascism is anti-working class and anti-democratic. It is a

A selection of right wing calling cards and propaganda given pride of place in the Football Intelligence Unit's black museum.

physical force movement. Force must be met with force, violence must be met with counter-violence - not pacifism. AFA nationally has helped curb the ambitions of the BNP for the moment, but the fight is far from over. Labour has turned its back on working class aspirations, and announces that it will in future be a middle class party for a middle class people. The far-right intend to fill the void. This they have already achieved at football. To one degree or another, nearly all the football firms are right-wing. In 1993, a selection of over 600 turned out to oppose the Bloody Sunday demo in London. Celtic, because of its identification with another tradition, is probably the only club that the fascists have never tried to organise in. So it is appropriate that Celtic is the first club to organise against them. Up till now the far-right have had a free run at football. The fightback starts here."



Celtic Fans

Against Fascism!

Method In Our Madness

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

The anti-fascists were then held in the middle of the road for over an hour, blocking all access for local people. Meanwhile, the BNP were allowed to leaflet the High Street, but, even with the police guarding them, they were visibly shaken and seemed very eager to get away, and were not seen again for the rest of the day.

Despite AFA being denied the opportunity to get into the BNP and remove them from the estate, the contact with the local residents was very positive, and when the local group had leafletted the High Street on the previous four weekends they had received good responses. The local residents have certainly had enough of the fascists, their police outriders, and the subsequent disruption and inconvenience.

AFA had a much freer rein in Manchester recently, and the outcome of the day reflected this. AFA's Northern Region mobilised to deal with the anticipated loyalist/fascist counter demonstrations at January's Bloody Sunday march in Manchester. The police on the day had, unusually, to cope with both Manchester teams playing at home in the cup - consequently, limited numbers were deployed to police the march. Rumours abounded that the police on the march were only specials, but whatever the reason they certainly weren't over keen on getting between AFA and the opposition.

The first contact of the day was made at the Clarence pub, on the route of the march. A loyalist/fascist mob of approx 20 had met up there and were

trying to whip up some City fans into having a go at the march. As the march approached, they bowled out of the boozier, full of the usual Sieg Heils and Rule Britannias. As it goes, their most ferocious fighting was with each other as they desperately tried to scramble back through the door (which their comrades inside tried to slam in their faces) as they were hit by an AFA pincer movement. Game on. As AFA stewards dealt with those unfortunate enough to be outside, and chased the remainder through the boozier and out the back, a flute band stopped outside, providing a perfect musical accompaniment to the event. Dave Taylor, Rochdale's top fascist, was nowhere to be seen when the fighting started. Mention must be made of the poor soul who jumped over the back fence to escape AFA - right into the jaws of an angry growler.

AFA pulled back onto the pavement, expecting the old bill to intervene - they didn't, so a second wave went through the pub. More of the same. The fascists fled, the majority of the City fans inside the pub just stood out of the way, wanting nothing to do with them. The governor said on the radio that night that £2000 of damage had been caused to the pub - I suppose you could call it an on-the-spot fine.

After the Clarence, the main AFA group was eventually forced to disperse by the police. It appears that the fascists saw this as an opportunity to give it the 'big 'un', so they did, following the bands, regaling them with the usual taunts and insults. One of the bandsmen put it well - "It was simply a case of looking at my

watch, and thinking any second now..." What had he seen that his aggressors hadn't? A third and separate firm of AFA stewards moving up behind them. As it bounced out of a sidestreet into them, all they could muster in response was a terrified "Run!" And they did.



"Alright? I'm here to get into the reds" Seconds later - time out for a quiet moment of reflection

And so it went on. AFA stewards occupied Albert Square, ahead of the march, as this was where Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness was due to speak, and consequently was a likely focal point for the opposition. A couple of hapless individuals did appear, obviously intending to meet up with the rest of their 'boys'. Problem was, their boys had been delayed elsewhere. Austin Stoneam, Blackburn's BNP organiser, after making a quick assessment of the situation, demanded that some indifferent coppers should escort

him from the area in a police van. One fool approached a group of stewards with the immortal opening line, "Alright? I'm here to get into the reds." He then proudly produced the St George's flag he had brought along for the occasion. As it happens, the flag proved rather useful; it was soon

Committee of this fact) but were fulfilling prior commitments in Leeds on the day. The Martyrs Committee were not physically capable of defending their own meeting, and had it not been for the police, the Martyrs' rally would surely have been butchered. Compare this to the events around the Bloody Sunday march. The day was, from AFA's point of view, a complete success. Three AFA stewards were arrested but released with cautions. The fascists weren't able to gain any momentum, they were denied the opportunity to mob-up and consolidate their forces. They were out-manoeuvred and out-fought.

The second point concerns the police, the other key player in this three-cornered fight. At last year's Martyrs' rally, the police presence protected them from the fascists, in contrast to previous Martyrs events, where the police have been forced to protect the loyalists. If the fascists/loyalists were hoping for police protection at the Bloody Sunday march, then they must have been bitterly disappointed. But even with state protection, as in Kirkby, the very fact that AFA were present and obviously prepared to confront the police in order to get at the BNP shook them out of operating as they would have liked.

Nevertheless the police played a pivotal role and clearly they have their own agenda. At the Manchester Martyrs' Commemoration, they prevented violence, but allowed an effective protest, ie meeting cancelled. On Bloody Sunday, they allowed protest, but ignored violence - protest crushed. In Kirkby, the police used violence to prevent effective protest. With the even greater license allowed under the Criminal Justice Act, the route one approach is likely to become a firm favourite with plod. The situation has changed and militant anti-fascists need to adapt.

No Surrender!

Dear Red Action,

I was a little taken aback by the harsh condemnation of the James Connolly Society: 'The Best Of A Bad Bunch', RA Issue 70. On the evidence you presented (double dealing, dishonesty) you have a case, never the less the general tone of the article was harsh, almost fundamentalist. The point is, who benefits if former allies like the JCS, The Bands Alliance, and Red Action become bitter enemies? Certainly not republicanism. And that is my primary criticism. For surely it is the bitterness engendered by your public denunciation that makes any future reconciliation an unlikely prospect. That said, a report in The Herald, 28/4/95, claimed that the JCS 'appealed to loyalists to call a truce' over a planned march on June 3rd in memory of Edinburgh-born Republican, James Connolly 'left me flabbergasted.

As we all know, Loyalism has more than a passing resemblance to fascism, albeit of the provincial variety. It is fairly certain that many of the supporters of the 'likely' counter-demo will also be supporters of far-right groups, like the British National Party. Does this not mean that as well as calling a truce with the loyalists, that the JCS is also running up the white flag to the BNP? Quite apart from questions of principle, this statement, if true, also seems tactically inept. Not only was the plea dismissed out of hand by a loyalist spokesman, but at a stroke the appeal legitimises loyalist triumphalism, as the flip side of Republicanism, making it easier for those, not least the state, to duly condemn both as sectarian.

Despite my continuing reservations regarding Red Action's intolerant approach (and not only in regard to the JCS), if this is what results from going 'mainstream' as alleged in the article, then on balance, I'd rather be a fundamentalist - no surrender to the BNP!
JH, Aberdeen.

POW

Dear RA

Nearly nine months into the ceasefire, prison conditions for Republican POWs continue to worsen.

On a recent visit to Frankland Prison, I witnessed yet more examples of the British government's refusal to move forward on the issue of prisoners' rights, or rather their determination to move backwards.

The authorities at Frankland have built a 'visitors' centre', supposedly to reduce the waiting time for visitors. In reality, it only adds an extra layer of red tape to hold visitors up. There are no facilities in the new centre - not even a drinks machine. Given that friends and families of prisoners have often had to travel a long way to get to Frankland, this must be seen as a deliberate policy to dissuade relatives from coming by making the visit as uncomfortable as possible.

This is confirmed by the recent introduction of new plastic seating, rather like the sort you get in MacDonalds or a motorway service station. Tables and chairs are fixed, and there is now a rule that says that the prisoner and visitor must stay on their own seat. The reason given for this is that some prisoners were taking advantage of visits, and behaving in an 'indecent' manner. But the real reason is to further humiliate prisoners and their families.

When I visited Irish Republican POW Patrick Hayes last month, another POW, Tommy Jack, was being visited by his fiancée. The prison warders used the new rule to step in and prevent Tommy and his fiancée from hugging. "Decency" had nothing to do with it. The aim is simply to deprive prisoners

★ LETTERS ★

of any form of reasonable, decent human contact with their visitors. In short, they aim to make visiting conditions intolerable.

When the prison officers saw Tommy hugging his fiancée, they barged in officiously and demanded that they sit apart. The incident began to escalate as Tommy refused to be treated like an animal. Other prisoners took his side. The attitude of the prison staff and the governor who gives them their orders created the incident, and their intransigence nearly led to a serious incident. The new rule is nothing short of degrading, and the authorities know it.

Many POWs get visits from their families, including young children. Such visits are extremely important to people serving such long sentences. These visits are the only contact they may get with their children before they grow up. And yet, the new visitors centre at Frankland has absolutely no facilities for children. Throughout the endless waiting that inevitably precedes any visit, the children are expected to sit quietly and behave themselves, stuck in a tiny space until the category A officers decide to process you.

The whole experience is terrible for children. They are not treated as children at all, but merely as someone who might potentially aid a prisoner. Once inside, a child may have been waiting for a long time already, and yet they then have nothing whatsoever to do except sit and wait. The

prison authorities do not seem to recognise that children need to be treated with respect, and provided with appropriate facilities.

The fact is that conditions for visitors have now deteriorated to such an extent that at least two POWs in Frankland have indicated that they will no longer accept visitors. Nor is the situation restricted to Frankland. The same conditions, the same deterioration, the same attitudes on the part of the authorities are repeated up and down the country, in particular where Irish POWs are concerned.

Surely this can only be due to the intention of the Home Office to increase the pressure on POWs, escalate the pressure in the jails, and repress the prisoners even more, thus putting more and more pressure on the ceasefire.

Julie, North London

PANTHER

Dear Red Action,

I was pleased to see your article on the Panthers in the last issue, and incidentally, your review of Larry O'Hara's book, although I must admit my assessment of his work is more positive than yours. Anyway, given your noted support for political prisoners I am writing to appeal for your help in defending the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal, an African-American journalist, revolutionary and political prisoner. Mumia, a former

Black Panther and supporter of the radical MOVE organisation has been on death-row since 1981 on charges that he killed a policeman. These charges are false, there was no forensic evidence linking Mumia to the murder, witnesses saw another man run from the scene after shooting the policeman and the trial was a travesty of justice. Mumia has been imprisoned for his political beliefs.

The recent election of a right wing Republican governor in Philadelphia, committed to executing death row prisoners, means that Mumia, a one time black journalist, could be killed at any time. Governor Tom Ridge won the election on a pro-death penalty platform and has pledged to sign death warrants as soon as he can. Mumia is at the top of his list of 170 death row prisoners and only a massive show of international solidarity can save him. 1. Please publicise his case in your organisation.

2. Write in protest demanding a re-trial to Governor Tom Ridge, Main Capitol Building, Room 225, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, USA, and demand that executions cease.

3. Please send donations to 'Mumia Abu-Jamal Legal Defence', Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Avenue, No. 115, New York, New York 10023-5001.

4. Write directly to Jamal c/o Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Green, 1040 E.Roy Furman Hwy, Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, PA 15370.

5. Consider using articles from Mumia's weekly death row column - these can be obtained from the above address. Best Wishes, Derek Wall On behalf of Green Revolution and MOVE supporters in the UK

Honeypot?

Hello Honeypot Red Action Me and my mates used to have respect for you but the latest issue paper, no 70, has changed all that. You say people didn't throw stuff out of coach windows onto the filth. This is bullshit cos we were throwing stuff out of the skylights in our busses roof. Just cos you didn't see it doesn't mean it didn't happen. also, seldom have I read such deliberately politically ignorant bullshit as "there is nothing about Class War cost and practice that politically distinguishes it from Trotskyism". YOU know very well this is bullshit.

And to accuse Class War of being 'agent provocateurs' when MIS have been sniffing inside your organisation for years (witness recent IRA/Red Action jailings) is just a joke. Then you say your mail is being interfered with on the next page! Your jealousy is obvious for all to see. Hull Anarchists.

Red Action would like to make it clear that FREE subscriptions are available to all prisoners. In addition, we particularly welcome letters from the jails.

ATWD

Any Teague Will Do

As the 'Peace Process' slowly stumbles on, fear starts to stalk the hearts of the loyalist right wing. That well known intellectual, Sammy Wilson of the Democratic Unionist Party, has articulated a favourite view of the loyalist right wing.

He has called for unionists to examine whether or not it is necessary to physically fight and to be prepared for the sacrifices and hardships of a physical force campaign to establish an independent Ulster. He also claimed that his views represented current DUP thinking.

Wilson is prepared to discuss such ideas within the unionist population in order to prepare them for the future. Like many loyalists he regards the current process as part of an inevitable drift towards a United Ireland. Such a happening would be, in his eyes, hellish for the loyalists.

Once again we see the politicians in the DUP whipping up fears. It is not that there is a real prospect of a united Ireland. It is that they, the loyalists, may have to co-operate with the Catholics and/or nationalists of the North. Time and time again the leadership of the DUP has marched the frightened and fearful loyalists up to the barricades and then stood back whilst they carried out the very deeds that their supreme Paisley would then later denounce.

Generally speaking, loyalist reaction in a violent form has been almost exclusively directed at Catholics, any Catholics, or as the racist graffiti it, ATWD, ie. Any Teague Will Do.

Racism has been an essential ingredient in loyalist thinking from the time of its arrival in Ireland.

Many Ulster Protestants were brought up in a narrow religious fundamentalism, exclusivist, elitist and 'saved'. They regarded the Catholic Irish as not only different but also as inferior. This view has been referred to by Professor Lee as the 'Herrenvolk Democracy'. It projects an image of sturdy, dour, reliable, brave, individualistic and intelligent Protestants contrasting with Catholics as feckless, lazy, dirty, irresolute and superstitious. The belief of racial superiority is always an attractive theory to those who have a little and fear competition from those who have nothing.

However, that racism was not and is not confined to the have-nots of the Protestant working class. At the turn of the century, a leading liberal industrialist called Sinclair argued that there were two nations; "so utterly distinct in their racial characteristics, in their practical ideas, in their religious sanctions and in their sense of civic and national responsibility, that they cannot live harmoniously side by side unless under the even-handed control of a just central authority."

Today the mainstream unionist party, the UUP, supposedly less extreme than Wilson's DUP, and which ruled the six-county statelet for fifty years, implementing a de facto apartheid policy, still refuses to acknowledge the wrong it did then. In attitude, behaviour and policy it still regards Catholics/nationalists as inferior. The Party's links with the sectarian Orange Order remain. A member of the British Parliament, Martin Smyth, is the leader

of the Orange Order. He refuses to acknowledge the wrong done to the Catholics of the lower Ormeau Road by persistent and provocative Orange demonstrations that reek of racist triumphalism.

This attitude the unionists try to cover by reference to religious and civil freedoms. Indeed one of the new breed of intellectual unionists, Arthur Aughey, has argued that; "The imperial notion of 'civus Britannicus sum' has transformed itself into the democratic ideal of different nations, different religions and different colours all equal citizens under one government."

It was from this 'democratic ideal' that the Republic of Ireland seceded to build a state based on national unity. The Solemn Covenant of 1912 was designed to ensure equal citizenship in the United Kingdom.

This is just intellectual crap. There never was equal treatment within the six-county state, neither from Unionists nor British. There never was nor is equal treatment under British law for West Indians, Asians, their descendants or any other racial minorities inside the British state.

The British state was once the centre of the British Empire, the northern Unionists saw themselves as friends of that empire. Carson, the acknowledged leader of Unionist opposition to Home Rule, was clear as to his position, "the paramount necessities of Imperial defence would demand the maintenance of the union."

With the ending of the British Empire, the Ulster Loyalists are stranded as flotsam washed up on the shores of history. Leaderless they sway with the weather. One day their 'democratic'



DUP leader Ian Paisley with Sammy Wilson, at Ulster Resistance rally in the 1980s.

politicians like Wilson call for war preparations. Other days their hit men represented by the Ulster Democratic Party (UDA) and the Progressive Unionist Party (UPV) say they recognise the wrongs done to their fellow Catholics by the old Stormont regime, whilst stockpiling weapons such as discovered in Hollywood, County Down.

It is no wonder that the latest statement from the Irish National Liberation Army on May Day 1995 confirmed that the army was not on a permanent ceasefire. While posing no threat to the current peace process, the INLA remains unconvinced by the current process. They articulated five areas for concern:

- 1/ The failure of the British Government to acknowledge its history of violent interference in Irish affairs.
- 2/ The intransigent British Government attitude to the issue of political prisoners and their position on decommissioning.
- 3/ The effects of partition and the unionist veto on political development in Ireland.

4/ The urgent need to deal effectively with the social and economic imbalance

5/ The need to disband the RUC and create in its place an acceptable police service.

We support a just and lasting peace, ideally that would be of a non-violent approach to achieving the basic Republican aim of a British withdrawal from Ireland. Unfortunately in our view there is presently no programme that constitutes such an alternative. The past few months has shown with great clarity the obvious disdain in which the British hold for Republicans adopting a non-violent approach to conflict resolution." The caution of the INLA and the Socialist Republican Movement generally for the whole current peace process is well-founded against a backdrop of loyalist re-arming, sabre rattling by the DUP and British Government contempt for Irish Republicanism. National liberation is still on the agenda. Sean Reid, Belfast.

One of the hallmarks of the 'Bolshevik' style revolutionary sect is the concept of 'the masses'. Implicit in the term is a kind of ritual flattery coupled with an assumption of class (and personal) superiority. The 'masses' and their alter ego, the 'workers', are assumed to have no independent political consciousness: the 'masses' have no will of their own. The masses are a slumbering, lobotomised giant. The concept of the monolithic party is a distillation of the concept of the monolithic working masses.

How closely does this concept of the working class as a single revolutionary/lumpen mass correspond to the perceptions of Marx and Engels? In fact, both Marx and Engels, in the scattered comments they make on the subject, were acutely aware of the potential divergences in political consciousness resulting from concrete conditions of existing capitalist societies. They fully appreciated how, as Engels expressed it in a letter to Marx in 1852, "the instinctive class hatred of the workers against the industrial bourgeoisie" could exist along side "the reactionary cravings of the workers and their prejudices."

Marx was acutely aware of the *antagonisms* existing even within the core of the class, the industrial proletariat: "The organisation of the proletariat into a class, and consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves." The reason for this state of affairs is straightforward.

"Competition separates individuals from one another, not only the bourgeois, but *still more* the workers, in spite of the fact that it brings them together. Hence it is a long time before these individuals can unite..." Marx, for example, comments how "formerly active members" of the proletariat, after the failure of the 1848 revolutions, "were caught by the temporary bribe of greater work and wages, and turned into 'political blacks'."

This refers to economic competition between workers on an individual level; but both Marx and Engels recognised how this level of competition generated *fractional* conflicts within the class. Engels considered that, "this division of the propertyless or working classes into farm hands, labourers, artisans, factory workers and lumpen proletariat...already makes it impossible for them to mutually clarify themselves about their unity of interests, to come to an understanding, to constitute themselves into a single class."

For example, he cites contemporary trade unions uniting skilled adult workers: "They form an aristocracy among the working class; they have succeeded in enforcing for themselves a relatively comfortable position, and they accept it as final."

These privileged workers actively conspire against the more oppressed sections of the class: "since [1848] the colossal growth of industry has produced a class of workers of whom there are as many or more than there are 'skilled' workers in the trade unions...but who can never become members...do you suppose that the unions ever consider doing away with this rubbish? Not in the least...the fools want to reform society to suit themselves but not to reform themselves to suit the development of society...This I think will explain many things to you in the behaviour of these privileged workers."

The reactionary behaviour of these "privileged" layers appeared to Engels (and presumably to Marx) as the *normal* position of the labour aristocrats in developed capitalist societies.

He contrasted this attitude with the "proletarian consciousness of the masses." The 'masses' referred to by Engels refer specifically to the unskilled or lower paid sections of the class. Yet this "proletarian consciousness" does not signify a consistent revolutionary awareness. Far from it. It is this strata that Engels evidently means to indicate when he acknowledges (in 1888) that: "I must own that nowhere in the civilized world are the working people less actively resistant, more passively submitting to fate, more bewildered, than in the East End of London."

Yet in the following year, Engels gave his opinion that: "Now the movement has at least been set going...Formally the movement is first of all a trade union movement, but utterly different from that of the *old* Trade Unions of skilled labourers, the labour aristocracy. The people are making a far greater effort than before now, they are drawing far greater masses into the struggle, shaking up society far more profoundly, and putting forward more far-reaching demands: the eight-hour day, a general federation of all organisations, and complete solidarity...Moreover, the people regard their immediate demands as only provisional...they must learn from their own experiences, from the consequences of their own mistakes. But since, unlike the old Trades Unions, they greet every suggestion of the identity of interest between capital and labour with scornful laughter, this will not take very long..."

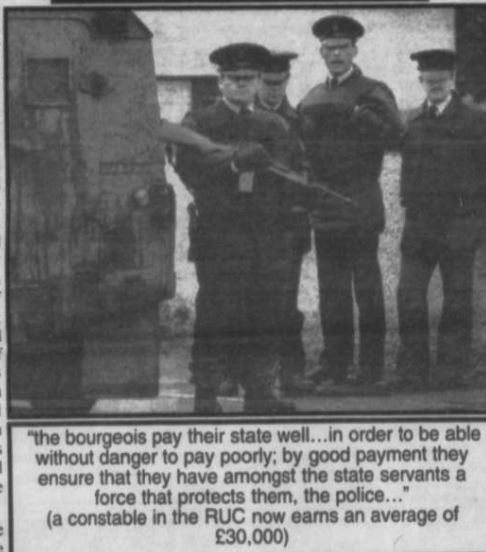
The emphasis is carefully laid upon the necessity of these 'backward' sections organising *spontaneously* and *independently*. Engels put great hope in the revolutionary potential of the most highly exploited elements of the workforce: "the masses are on the move and there is no holding them back anymore. The longer the stream is dammed up the more powerful will be the breakthrough when it comes. And these unskilled workers are very different fellows from the fossilised men of the old Trades Unions; not a trace of the old formalist spirit and of the craft exclusiveness of the engineers...on the contrary, a general call for the organisation of all Trades Unions into one brotherhood and for a direct struggle against capital."

The essence of the matter was that "the new unions stick together" in direct conflict with the old 'craft' unionism. In other contexts, Engels makes it clear that what he called the "tremendous heap of traditionally inherited rubbish" inseparable from "an old political and labour movement" typified by the "skilled unions", affected "Bricklayers, Carpenters, Joiners, Compositors, etc." It was to the layers *below* these that Engels saw developing a revolutionary momentum. "But *under* the surface the movement is going on, embracing ever wider sections and mostly just among the hitherto stagnant *lowest* strata. The day is not far off when this mass will suddenly find itself..."

For Engels, then, the 'masses' are identified as the class of workers below those of the tradesman engaged in relatively well paid skilled work and protected by the exclusivity of his union. It is this 'unskilled' class that he goes on to identify as the potential bearers of revolutionary momentum.

The key issue appears to be the degree of exploitation suffered by the respective classes of worker. As he remarks in another context, "the living standard of the American worker is considerably higher than that of even the English worker, and *this alone* is sufficient to relegate him to the back seat for some time." (RA's emphasis.) The pattern of class differentiation and of antagonism between the various degrees of the working class exists independently of the influence of a feudal inheritance: "a native working class has developed [in America] and is also to a large extent organised in trade unions. But it still assumes an aristocratic posture and wherever possible leaves the ordinary badly paid occupations to the immigrants...The immigrants however are divided up into different

The Most Dangerous Class Of All



"the bourgeois pay their state well...in order to be able without danger to pay poorly; by good payment they ensure that they have amongst the state servants a force that protects them, the police..." (a constable in the RUC now earns an average of £30,000)

nationalities, and do not understand each other...And your bourgeois knows...how to play off one nationality against another, so that differences in the living standards of workers exist...to an extent unheard of elsewhere."

Capitalism is responsible for engineering differential rates of pay amongst the working classes, and by dividing the various layers of the class against itself, the *general level* of wages and the militancy of the class in relation to the bourgeoisie is kept down.

Engels noted a further development: that the provision of direct employment by the state itself created, "alongside the natural, independent proletariat, an artificial proletariat, dependent on the government" - a section of the proletariat he clearly expected to play a conservative or reactionary role corresponding to its dependence on the state. Workers in the defence industry - let alone the vast layer of sub-professionals in the fields of education, social work and health, stand as contemporary examples of this tendency. Furthermore, even radical members of municipal or state professions will possess a natural tendency to preserve the hierarchy, authority and procedures of the structures in which they work.

Engels believed that the ultimate effect was that: "the English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat alongside the bourgeoisie. For a nation that exploits the world this of course is to a certain extent justifiable." Victorian England represented an almost perfect example of what might now be called bourgeois *hegemony*.

The broad division of society into classes was deeply reflected within the ranks of the working class itself: "the most repugnant thing here is the bourgeois 'respectability' which has grown deep into the bones of the workers! The division of society into innumerable strata...each with its own pride but also its inborn respect for its 'betters' and 'superiors' is so old and firmly established that the bourgeois find it fairly easy to get their bait accepted."

Engels adds that the only factor that would shatter this "bourgeois infection" would be an economic depression, "a few thoroughly bad years."

The present recession provides some illustrations of this development. The tendency of the "bourgeois infection" to penetrate the working class is shown in the illusion of the Tories 'property owning democracy' - the ideology of which undoubtedly sank roots in certain 'privileged' sections of the class, references to the "christian slave nature" of the workers and their "fancied national superiority, with their essentially bourgeois ideas and views and their narrow-mindedness" abound in texts by both Marx and Engels.

It is sometimes suggested that Marx and Engels failed to appreciate the extent to which the labour movement would be dominated by a conservative bureaucracy. Nothing could be further from the truth. Marx frequently identified this process: "The English working class had gradually been becoming more and more deeply demoralised by the period of corruption since 1848 and had at last got to the point where it was no more than the tail of...its oppressors, the capitalists. Its direction had passed completely into the hands of venal trade union leaders and professional agitators...these fellows never raised a finger for their own brothers in South Wales, condemned by the mine owners to death from starvation...to crown the whole affair the workers' only representatives in the House of Commons...direct representatives of the miners, and themselves originally miners voted with the great Liberal party..."

This tendency is summarised by Marx as, "a law of the proletarian movement that everywhere a section of the workers' leaders goes bad." The labour aristocracy represented the 'bourgeoisification' of the 'respectable' workers. Other strata, although not attracted to bourgeois morality, represented a still more profoundly reactionary force. Such strata, largely though not exclusively drawn from the working class, Marx terms the 'lumpenproletariat'. He is decidedly uncomplimentary about these 'lumpens' - an extremely numerous class in his day - in which he appears to have included 'parasitic' elements such as the criminal classes, certain vagrant occupations (for some reason knife-grinders and the like get a particular hammering), and bohemian elements in general, as well as residual elements from pre-capitalist strata discarded by the growth of capitalism.

In a number of contexts he plainly regards the lumpenproletariat as inherently or typically reactionary. In Naples, he finds "the counter-revolution was the lumpenproletariat allied with the monarchy, against the bourgeoisie." It appears that he regarded the lumpens as a more reactionary force than the capitalist class itself. Closer to home, analysing the position of the arch-reactionary Catholic Church, he writes, "In England Catholicism has its few supporters in the two extremes of society, the aristocracy and the

lumpenproletariat. The lumpenproletariat, the mob, which is either Irish or of Irish ancestry, is Catholic by descent."

He is still more explicit however in his most famous work, The Communist Manifesto. The 'proletariat' here is opposed both to the lumpenproletariat and the petit-bourgeoisie - shopkeepers, artisans and the like - who are reactionary. However, "The 'dangerous class', the social scum [the lumpenproletariat], that passively-rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of the old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue."

Marx writes in greater detail of the counter-revolutionary taken by "the armed and bought out lumpenproletariat fighting against the working and thinking proletariat." In the 1848 revolutions in Paris and Vienna. In the 1848 revolutionary struggles in Paris, which he regards as "the greatest historical battle that has ever taken place", it was a case of "the bourgeoisie allied with the lumpenproletariat against the working class". The French provisional government formed a reactionary 'Mobile Guard' whereby the "Paris proletariat was confronted with an army, drawn from its own midst", who, "belonged for the most part to the lumpenproletariat, which in all big towns forms a mass sharply differentiated from the industrial proletariat, a recruiting ground for thieves and criminals of all kinds, people without a definite trade [etc]"

Such people were "bought" and "given their own uniform". They are "the scum of depraved elements from all classes" who are however, "considerably transformed by means of good pay into a praetorian guard for the existing rulers." In German ideology, Marx is already clear that, "the bourgeois pay their state well...in order to be able without danger to pay poorly; by good payment they ensure that they have amongst the state servants a force that protects them, the police..."

He adds that the bourgeois force the workers themselves to pay for these "state servants" through taxes, so that the wages of these same servants can be kept to the lowest possible levels!

These elements who are "armed and bought" to be the "bribed tool" of reactionary forces (principally the state) bear a direct and obvious analogy to similar, more systematically recruited elements in present societies. Allowing for the development of the role of state forces and the contemporary circumstances of 'lumpen' elements in mature capitalist society, the correlation between the social and political role of Marx's lumpenproletariat and declassified, "bought", allies of the modern state and its capitalist managers, is extremely close. The police (a constable in the RUC now earns an average of £30,000), bailiffs, prison officers, private security guards, the touts of the DSS fraud squad etc, play an identical reactionary role within contemporary society.

It is important to note that although Marx himself was certainly aware that many of these elements *came from* the working class, they in no sense remain a part of it. His utter detestation of such elements, witnessed in the passages quoted above, is one of the most striking features of his political writings.

It is plain by now that both Marx and Engels, in their concrete analysis of the material conditions and their reflection in the ideology and practices of the working classes, were profoundly aware of the reactionary pressures operating within them. The material origin of this phenomenon lies in the sectional diversity and conditions of relative privilege within the working class itself. The corruption of its own leaders is one of the reasons Marx insisted upon the importance of the spontaneous movements of the workers themselves, as opposed to the programmes of trade union institutions or 'party' organisations: that is, of "demands that have spontaneously arisen out of the labour movement itself." In particular, both Marx and Engels looked towards the most exploited, unskilled (backward) elements of the class as displaying the greatest potential for revolutionary action.

Book Reviews

The Third Force

British Intelligence, Brian Nelson and the Re-Arming of the Loyalist Death Squads Available from Republican Publications.

In reviewing this pamphlet the main problem quickly became exactly what part of the depth of information contained in this concise yet detailed publication I would use to convey to the reader the depths to which the British state is prepared to descend in order to pursue its interests in Ireland.

To those with some knowledge of the conflict, the allegations that have been made against the Security Forces over its collusion with Loyalist paramilitaries are widely known.

This pamphlet goes a step further however, documenting that, far from instances of collusion being down to a few 'bad apples' amongst the rank-and-file of the RUC and UDR, the British state, via British Military Intelligence (BMI) was, through the use of high-ranking informers within the UDA such as Brian Nelson, directing the operations and activities of the Loyalist death squads in Ireland.

The use by Imperialist and Colonial powers of what the British army described in their 1973 secret training manual 'Land Operations, Volume III - Counter Revolutionary Operations': "Liason with, and organisation, training and control of, friendly guerrilla forces" is nothing new and has been used regularly as Britain

fought desperately to hold the crumbling remnants of its Empire together.

The main exponent and architect of this tactic during recent British military interventions and the man responsible for its careful introduction to the early years of the conflict in Ireland was the then Brigadier Frank Kitson. The work of BMI during the early part of the war is well documented within the pamphlet, and it describes how its ability to manipulate loyalists was vital in bringing about de-stabilisation during such key times as the IRA truces and the UWC strike in order to influence opinion in both Britain and Ireland. BMI undoubtedly accounted for the highest death-toll in any one day of the war, when its agents directed and organised the bombing of Dublin and Monaghan on 17th May 1974. What else could possibly explain the apparent acquisition and subsequent loss, in quick succession, the loyalist capacity to manufacture and deploy such high-powered bombs?

But it is when we look at the case of Brian Nelson, a high-ranking member of the UDA working as a British agent, that the full extent of Britain's pursuit of its dirty war against Ireland is in full evidence.

During the mid-80s, the government was coming under increased pressure, both at

home and abroad, over its shoot-to-kill policies and other flagrant abuses of human rights which were seriously undermining its international profile as a 'neutral' participant attempting to hold apart 'the warring tribes of Ulster'. A new strategy that would enable it to target Republicans, Nationalists, and anyone else who stood opposed to its role in Ireland, and at the same time assist in displaying the sectarian nature of the conflict, would have to be developed. The obvious tool for this job would

large shipment of modern weapons and a new streamlined intelligence and targeting system, enable the British state, when required, via a third party, to: (a) target and 'eliminate' individual Republican activists (b) terrorise the general Nationalist population in the Six Counties (c) influence the government and population of the 'Free State' by threats or actual acts of violence.

My use of the words "third party" reflect in a way a distinctive line of thought within BMI. In South Africa, the Military Intelligence Service ran a secret third force that, while targeting particular opponents to the Apartheid regime, also embarked upon a policy of creating general mayhem, with massacres in and around the townships, with the aim of

Nelson secured for the UDA, with full knowledge of his BMI handlers, a huge arsenal of 200 AK-47 rifles, 90 pistols, 500 grenades, 30,000 rounds of ammunition and a dozen RPG rocket launchers, that enabled it, in the crude language of the media, to kill far more people than the IRA in the remaining years of the conflict.

The pamphlet goes on to look in detail at the Nelson trial and aftermath, the arms from S. Africa revelations and the MI5 sting operation at Teesport in November '93. These issues are far too complex to go into them all in this review, so instead I'll use an extract from the chapter entitled "Arms from South Africa."

"De Kock's (Head of SA Third Force) role in anti-ANC warfare was exposed by a former SA policeman turned whistleblower, Dick Coetzee. Coetzee fled to Zambia in 1989 and ended up living in London in 1991. In November 1992, a secret SA investigation prompted by British media speculation found that British Intelligence agent Charles Simpson and members of the RUC had been involved in a plot to kill Coetzee which DeKock had sanctioned.

"The investigation revealed that RUC officers provided surveillance and intelligence on Coetzee and also offered to take him out. Two SA Defence Force agents negotiated with Simpson and RUC officers on a trip to London and Ireland in April 1991. The two were Pamela du Randt, a captain in the South African Intelligence Service, and secretary to the head of SAMI, Christoffel van der Westhuizen; and Leon Flores, an ex-policeman on the SAI payroll.

Flores paid £2,000 to Charles Simpson "for services rendered by his RUC friends" in monitoring the activities of Dick Coetzee. When Flores and du Randt came to London

Charles Simpson took them to meet what British Intelligence claimed were three loyalist assassins at the Three Kings pub in Kensington. The SAI enquiry stated that two of the three were RUC officers.

"Following the Three Kings meeting, du Randt and Flores travelled with Simpson via Dun Loaghaire port to a second meeting in Hillsborough, County Down. There, further payment by means of the supply of Semtex explosives, weapons, night vision equipment and electronic eavesdropping devices was discussed for th continued monitoring of Coetzee.

These claims made in the internal SA investigations were later confirmed in the SA Supreme Court when Flores and du Randt were subpoenaed to appear at the inquest into the murder of Bheki Mlangeni, a lawyer who had earlier been killed in SA by a parcel bomb intended for Dick Coetzee.

"The Dublin-based magazine, Phoenix, has reported that the agreement to monitor and kill Coetzee was an attempt to sting SAMI by Brit Intelligence, giving the latter leverage in persuading the South Africans to keep quiet about British involvement in the arming of the loyalist killer gangs."

There will be some people reading this who will say, "Ah, but they couldn't get away with that, could they?" After reading this pamphlet, my answer to them would quite simply be, "But they already have!"

On Sunday 18 December, the Army defused an incendiary device containing a kilogram of semtex and a can of petrol which had been left in Enniskillen.

County Fermanagh, on the eve of the second round of talks between Sinn Fein and the British government. Despite denials issued the following day from the IRA, the media were quick to lay the blame at either their door or at least the so-far fictional Irish National Republican Army. Who else, they argued, had access to semtex in the Province? Well, no-one, except British Military Intelligence.



Behind every successful man... Peter Robinson, DUP, MP, receiving instructions from UDA Commander John McMichael.

be the loyalist paramilitaries, but at the time they were quite simply not up to the job. Brian Nelson, under the guidance of his handlers, was to change all that.

The UDA (and soon the UVF) would, with the importation of

promoting conflict between the ANC and Inkhata supporters. This, in turn was used by the SA regime to justify their claim that it was not possible to bring the black population into any long-term peace settlement, let alone a full handover of power. It was from SAMI that Brian

Westhuizen; and Leon Flores, an ex-policeman on the SAI payroll.

Flores paid £2,000 to Charles Simpson "for services rendered by his RUC friends" in monitoring the activities of Dick Coetzee. When Flores and du Randt came to London

Fantasy Politics

'Socialists in the Trade Unions', by Alex Callinicos.

The new SWP book, "Socialists in the Trade Unions" bears all the resemblance to revolutionary politics as Fantasy Football does to the real thing. Written by that well-known horny-handed son of toil, Alex Callinicos, nephew of the late Lord Acton, owner of vast tracts of land in Zimbabwe, this book is the perfect introduction to the bizarre world of SWP speak.

A world where the slightest hint of a strike not only heralds a new phase in the class struggle but also leads to the unfortunate workers being submerged by hoards of SWP members, bearing copies of Socialist Worker and leaflets advising the workers what to do next.

A world where the valiant workers are always being held back by the evil trade union leaders, without whom we would probably be living in workers' paradise. A world where, despite lip service to the contrary, only the SWP know how to organise.

The main thrust of this book is that the unions are still strong in terms of numbers and fighting ability, and that over the last 18 months or so, we have begun to see a shift in the terms of combativity. The evidence for this is

scant, to say the least. Callinicos uses examples of the strikes by signal workers and post office workers, who are hardly mass battalions. While the strikes he mentioned were both successful on their own terms, both BR and The Post Office have suffered massive redundancies in the recent past without any strike action against them; that, of course, is the problem.

Unions have been instrumental in keeping British workers' wages at a tolerable level in the past, but not for at least 20 years, and rarely for the vast majority of unskilled workers, women workers, part-time or temporary groups. Even more importantly, there are very few cases of strike action preventing job losses.

The golden age of unionism that Callinicos looks back to in the fifties, sixties and seventies took place in a different world than we live in now. Even more than that, it wasn't really a golden age. The fifties and sixties were a period of expansion for capitalism, firms were willing to pay small wage rises in the threat of strike action rather than risk a disruption of production. Almost all of the disputes that took place were sectional, of very short duration, and overwhelmingly unpolitical. In other words, they had no or little effect upon the the consciousness

of those who took part. However, those strikes that failed had a negative effect on consciousness: a prime example of the latter case being the defeated 1971 Post Office strike that was still being cited as a reason for not taking action over twenty years later.

In this same so-called golden age of trade unionism, we also saw a strike in favour of racism at Tilbury docks. For a brief time in the early seventies there were a small number of strikes that took on the government directly over trade union legislation. The one that everybody remembers is the strike to free the Pentonville Five, jailed for defying Tory union laws, and mentioned in Callinicos' book. The one's that failed, including the strike that led to the jailing of the Shrewsbury pickets (including a certain Ricky Tomlinson), have been forgotten and are not mentioned in the book. Callinicos' reason for retreating and repeating the myths from the past is to convince SWP members that there is a possibility of a re-run on the cards in the nineties. Two things need to be remembered about this point: it wasn't the golden age that Callinicos claimed; and the wreckage of the old-style trade unionism and the divisions it sowed have led to an attitude towards unions of cynicism and mistrust from the average worker, who still pays dues but without any expectations.

As might be expected, Callinicos belabours the idea of Rank and Fileism as a way round the barrier of the bureaucracy, but the supporting examples he quotes, the Minority

Movement in the 1930's, the CP in the sixties, and the IS/SWP in the seventies all failed precisely because they were either being used purely as a lever on the trade union bureaucracy or as a recruiting ground for a Left organisation. A rank and file solidarity movement would be a great idea, but it is a total non-starter at the moment, and will be for the foreseeable future. The main problem with this book is that it is built on the fallacy that unions can play a progressive role. Partly this is due to the fact that the SWP recruits well out of union activists who tend to be middle-class, white-collar workers, but it is also based on the strange understanding that the trade unions were instrumental in the over-throwing of the Stalinist regime in Poland and the apartheid system in South Africa, amongst others. Solidarity called itself a trade union, but was a much wider social force, and the Apartheid regime toppled itself when it knew it could reinvent itself, as it has done. In both cases, their success was due to a deep crisis that engulfed society as a whole, not because trade unions were involved.

In many ways, the SWP's exhortations to the rank and file to "fight back, etc." make them closer in spirit to the Pre-World War One British syndicalists than Marxists, as they claim to be. At least in the latter's case, they were involved in mass struggles and had a clear, if wrong, strategy of bringing about socialism through a general strike. The SWP's strategy, such as it is, is limited to calling on workers to go on strike and then to join the SWP.

Following in the Leninist and Trotskyist tradition of fetishising the vanguard party, but also realising that they need a unique recruiting point, they act like super-strike supporters during a dispute.

So, if a strike loses it is because the revolutionary party isn't strong enough; if it wins, it shows the importance of the revolutionary party. As their chief guru, Tony Cliff said after the 1992 Miners' Demonstrations, when their slogan was 'TUC - Call a General Strike!': "Imagine if we had 15,000 members...and 30,000 supporters, the 21 October miners' demonstration could have been different. Instead of marching round Hyde Park, socialists could have taken 40 - 50,000 people to Parliament. If that had happened, Tory MPs wouldn't have dared vote with Michael Heseltine. The government would have collapsed!"

See, it's all in the numbers!

All in all, "Socialists in the Trade Unions" is an exercise in recruiting what remains of the left trade union activists to the SWP, thus consolidating their self-styled position as the "Main Force on the Left" If you think that is too cynical a view, why did their recent trade union conference include an hour-long discussion on "How to Use 'Socialist Worker' in the Workplace"? If, as Marx said, 'history repeats itself first as tragedy, then as farce', by the time it reaches the SWP it's more like a second showing of 'Beadle's About'.

IS IT SOMETHING WE SAID?

The Red Attitude fanzine, on sale outside Old Trafford, urges United supporters to join the battle against the thugs from fascist group Combat 18, who sparked the carnage in Dublin 11 days ago. And the frightening feud between the two rival groups threatens to turn next year's European Championship in England into a bloody orgy of violence.

Yet when the News of the World faxed copies of the fanzine's anti-fascist propaganda to the police Criminal Intelligence Unit, there was an amazing response. Their spokesman said: "As far as we are concerned, while we know of Red Action, they are not concentrating their efforts on football."

News of the World, 26/2/95

In a photograph of Hayes' flat released by the police after his arrest, an AK-47 assault rifle lies on the floor, while a copy of Socialist Worker lies on a chair. The juxtaposition is misleading but only just. The SWP is noisy but essentially harmless, but not far to the left of it is an altogether more shadowy group, to which Hayes belonged, and to which conventional stereotypes of peace-loving Englishmen do not apply. This is a domestic, non-Irish organisation that not only endorses Republican paramilitarism but enthusiastically espouses the use of violence against its own political adversaries in Britain.

Northern Ireland has long been a litmus test for the far-left: while most groups from the hard left in the Labour Party and beyond have traditionally paid lip-service to the cause of a United Ireland, all but those wishing to prove themselves "true revolutionaries" have balked at active assistance for the armed wing of the Republican Movement.

The conventional wisdom, in the words of Peter Wright, author of Spycatcher, is that the far left in Britain is about as threatening as "a pond full of ducks", but in Red Action's case there seems to be some substance to the claim that the rest of the left are imposters.

A Scotland Yard source says that the police expectation of Red Action is two-fold: first that "there may be some forging of closer links with revolutionary groups on the Continent, particularly where those groups are involved in violent clashes with Fascists"; and secondly that RA will "associate themselves with causes [other than Ireland] where they see potential opportunity for the overthrow of the British government."

Independent on Sunday, 29/1/1995

The election of Derek Beackon put the anti-racist movement to the test. Both Anti Fascist Action (AFA) and the Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA) drew the same conclusions from the rise of racism. They both believed that the white working class is racist and has no role to play in the struggle against the Nazis.

AFA and a handful of other similar organisations - rather than attempt to build a mass movement to smash the Nazis - have relied on a small group of street fighters to confront the fascists. In the end this always leads to secretive organisation that by definition excludes the vast majority of people. Small groups of people attacking groups of Nazis have never smashed them as the lessons of the 1930s and 1970s demonstrate.

Socialist Review, April 1995.

Police today condemned a football magazine featuring a chilling picture of a Manchester City fan apparently beaten senseless by thugs.

The stricken fan is pictured lying on the ground clutching his bleeding head, with a caption saying that he had been "met" by Manchester United supporters.

The left-wing fanzine Red Attitude carries the headline "Man United Anti-Fascists in Action" and claims that the victim was a British National Party sympathiser who got a taste of his own medicine.

Red Attitude, linked to the left-wing Anti-Fascist Action group, is in bitter conflict with extreme right-wing fans' organisations.

Manchester Evening News, 17/4/95

"The views of the Celtic fans, in particular, completely transcend the irrational bigotry and intolerance of the Rangers supporters who were interviewed.

Unfortunately the Warks/Clements team decided that the views expressed by the Celtic fans were not provocative enough and attempted to get a similarly bigoted response in order to provide some sort of 'balance' to the film. When these were not forthcoming they asked to be introduced to other fans."

The Herald, 6/5/95

Celtic Anti-Fascists response to the endeavours of the Warks/Clements production team to solicit anti-protestant and sectarian responses from Celtic fans for the Channel 4 commissioned 'Witness' programme. Mr

Alan Clements had implied that Celtic Anti-Fascists were "unrepresentative". After his production team reflect on the extremely hostile response that greeted them in pubs and outside Hampden Park, where they attempted to interview Celtic supporters, they might conclude that it is the views they sought that are "unrepresentative".

"[Red Action] should not delude themselves that the impudent RA, is threatening OP's 'entire enterprise', for it was plain to see that the "boisterous RA cuckoo" was much to big for its Trojan Horse. Theoretical Magazine Open Polemic Editorial Comment, Issue 11, April 1995



Glasgow RA members have a soft spot for their favourite fascist, a bit of a VOR regular, the old and extremely deranged Harry Mullin, who recently has confined himself to the poison pen, writing letters of hate to anyone who will ignore him. Red Action and AFA appear to be his own particular favourites for vitriol. At first, the tone of his letters was almost appealing, asking what us "...decent white workers" were doing in an organisation like RA?

However, being greeted first with silence, then with total derision he decided that our ability to resist his persuasive arguments was probably due to the fact that we were either Jewish or just another bunch of lefty students.

To Harry's horror, however, some concerned citizens decided to take a more forthright stance recently. The old lunatic was spotted in a cafe in Glasgow's famous Sauciehall Street, frantically writing his hate mail. As he emerged from the cafe, he was approached by a young man asking, "Excuse me mate, but have you got change of 50p?" Harry, never one to let an opportunity go 'begging', replies, "No, you see I'm unemployed..." But before the old bastard can get the rest out, the youth replies, "You're not unemployed, you're a fucking fascist!" Harry, realising that the game was up, lets out a scream of sheer terror and makes a brake for it, only to be decked by the superior arguments of his pursuer. Later, after his attacker has made a hasty departure, Harry struggles to his feet. He staggers blindly across the road, finally coming to rest against a parked car. Suddenly, he clutches at his chest and slips down the side of the car to lie motionless on the ground. Time for a sharp exit!

Hilarious, but you had to be there. Rwegular readers of RA need not fear for his health - a few days later, we received a letter from him, thanking us for pursuing the debate so earnestly and promising to "repay his debts". Watch this space...

Received wisdom has it that law'n' order is the preserve of the far-right. Not so, apparently, if these examples are anything to go by. In Manchester recently, a female associate of Red Action was approached by two youths, with intent to rob. They were promptly gassed. In the same city, a Red Action member was confronted by a man demanding money with menaces; "give me your money, I have a gun!" "C'mon then, let's see it" came the reply. The discussion continued along the lines of "You show me yours, I'll give you mine" until, with a dismissive "Wanker" in the direction of the wannabe Dick Turpin, our hero went on his way, his fortune intact.

Around the same time, in Birmingham, a Red Action member, accompanied by his pregnant wife, was strolling, from the Post Office, having cashed his giro. Suddenly, a youth, who they had previously noticed loitering with intent, produced a revolver and demanded cash. The individual in question, who weighs in at a generous seventeen stone, charged. The thief fled, clearly terror-stricken, firing the gun in the air, screaming "It's a fake, it's a fake!" Meanwhile, in Glasgow, a Red Action supporter was sitting in a pub with his mate, having a beer and watching the telly, when there was a blinding flash. Momentarily stunned, he recovered to find himself covered in blood. Some character, who was by now disappearing through the exit, had smashed him across the face with a pool cue. They immediately gave chase, first on foot, and then in a motor. Eventually, they ran him down (ran down? As in ran to ground? Nope, as in ran over.). I'm sure there's a moral in there somewhere.

RED ATTITUDE EDITORIAL
 (above) 1985: NF's Bulldog sneers at Red Action's proof-readers.

French Lessons?

"The thing that strikes me about this mag [Fighting Talk] is how they go on about being normal working class people albeit reds, yet if this is the case, why isn't there any spelling mistakes? why is it full of "big words" the average working class person wouldn't know what ment. WHY, because its written and AFA are middle class student wankers". (Original spelling, grammar and punctuation.)

As Searchlight remarked: *But how does the writer know there are no spelling mistakes, unless he himself*

knows how to spell? Could it be that he is a "middle class wanker" pretending to be working class by writing illiterately?

In 1945 George Orwell commented that in certain English circles it was considered 'effeminate' to spell a French phrase correctly. What, I wonder, would he (or indeed Freud) make of these wankers who consider it 'sissy' to spell English phrases correctly? Or indeed, the Hull anarchists (see Letters page) who manage "agent provocateur" but stumble over "busses"? The mind boggles.



Q: "So how do I join?" A: "Frightfully sorry, we have a minimum height requirement."

WE ARE RED ACTION

The collapse of Soviet communism has signalled the end of an era. Capitalism's golden age, defined by the economic and political certainties of the Cold War, has turned to crisis. As a discipline on the entire working class, mass unemployment is restored as a permanent condition. As capitalism expanded, many reforms such as nationalisation, implemented to serve the needs of capital, also served the needs of society. As capitalism contracts, deindustrialisation and the return to the principal of privatisation in health, public transport, housing and education sustains the profits of the wealthy directly at society's expense.

In the short term, open conflict within and between classes is certain. Ultimately, the choice faced will be government without consent or social revolution.

Leninism, which decrees the interests of the working class are subordinate to the will of one revolutionary party, is the decisive influence on the far left. An apologist for the authoritarian state, it advertises the lie that dictatorship (ie minority rule) can be progressive. This betrayal mocks the theory and practice of Marx and Engels and any notion of independent working class initiative. The surrender of the political high ground to the opponents of total social change has paralysed the working class internationally.

Sectarian division on the left continues to be a comfort to a system which socialism promised to replace. Factions, whose immaculate programmes for party dictatorship result in the pursuit of goals exclusive to themselves, contribute nothing to the real movement of the working class, except to help delay its political renaissance. In all essentials reactionary, they are the socialists of the previous generation.

Anarchism, which claims to be a libertarian alternative to Leninism, could never work. Anarchism means the principled opposition to the exercise of any authority. Accordingly, even the most perfect democracy would be regarded by anarchism as authoritarian as it means the imposition of a social decision by a majority on a minority. The answer to bureaucratic authority is democratic authority, not the abolition of authority.

We must start afresh.

In every country the working class possesses one striking advantage over the capitalists - numbers. However, numbers without unity and unity without organisation is free of political advantage. The purpose of a revolutionary working class organisation is to raise the working class to the position of the ruling class. To transfer political power from the minority to the majority.

Unconditional democracy is the sole political form through which the aspirations of the majority can then be exercised and made secure. A revolutionary organisation must always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole. It must be working class in instinct, composition and orientation. It must be built in a democratic manner from the bottom up, rather than by decree from the top down. Direct democratic control by working people over their own organisations is the necessary preparation for the future rule of working people over their own countries.

WE ARE THE REDS!

Supporting membership for a year is £5. Make cheque/p.o. out to Red Action. You will receive a subscription to the paper, a regular newsletter and notification of RA activities. Subscription to the paper are still available at £3 for 5 issues.

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